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LOVE ME LITTLE, LOVE ME LONG.





# Lobe me Little, Lobe me Long.

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

WILLIAM WILDING JONES.

London:

J. WELCH, Printer, St. Clement's Inn Passage, Strand.

1877.



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FROM  
THE BEQUEST OF  
EVERT J. JANSEN WENDELL  
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*Love me Little, Love me Long.*

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### CHARACTERS.

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SIR GEOFFREY CHILLINGWOOD, BART., M.P.

FRANK CHILLINGWOOD.

HONORABLE CHARLES RAFFLER.

TOM TUFTHUNT.

SIR HECTOR HARBOTTLE, ADMIRAL, K.C.B.

ARNOLD.

BOWLINE.

CHARLES (FOOTMAN).

CLARA BELLINGHAM.

KATE LAWRENCE.

MISS CHILLINGWOOD.

BABY CHILLINGWOOD.

LETTY (BABY'S MAID).

SERVANTS, &c.

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*The Scene lies at SIR GEOFFREY'S Country House.*

## LOVE ME LITTLE, LOVE ME LONG.

—o—

### ACT I.

SCENE.—*Breakfast room in SIR GEOFFREY CHILLINGWOOD'S country house: windows opening on lawn. FRANK and KATE discovered at breakfast.*

FRANK. Where are the others, Kate?

KATE. Your father and aunt were down two hours ago, but they managed to find a pretext for a quarrel at breakfast, so your father went upstairs to cool his passion over the leading articles in the *Times*, and your aunt has gone into the garden to calm her feelings over a piece of garden work.

FRANK. Ah! and Baby?

KATE. Oh, Baby was at the Muggletons' last night, and eat so much tipsy-cake that she has lain in bed longer than usual this morning, slightly ill. But what made you so late, Frank, last night?

FRANK. I got among a few of my set at the Red Lion, and we—we had a little joviality.

KATE. I didn't notice your boots outside your door this morning.

FRANK. No; strange enough, I found I had 'em on when I woke up.

KATE. Curious oversight! I heard you come in.

FRANK. Did you?

KATE. Yes. You seemed to have some trouble with the latch.

FRANK. I had some little difficulty in finding it.

KATE. I'm afraid you were—

FRANK. Yes, so am I. But now, Kate, let us speak seriously. This Miss Bellingham comes to-day.

KATE. I know, Frank, and I think it is time we decided on the course we are to pursue.

FRANK. What is to be done?

KATE. It is for you to determine that.

FRANK. What is your opinion?

KATE. That you should tell your father everything, and brave his anger.

FRANK. That's very well, Kate, but I don't like it.

KATE. We are only putting off the evil day.

FRANK. That's just it. I don't mind how long we put it off, but I do object to bring it on unnecessarily.

KATE. It must be told sometime.

FRANK. So it must,—we'll wait till "sometime" comes.

KATE. Oh, Frank! why can't—

FRANK. Now, now—you see, Kate, my father's mind is so thoroughly made up to bring about a marriage between this Miss Bellingham and myself, that I cannot tell what the consequences might be were I to confess that I had already acted for myself and married you—my sister's governess.

KATE. But I am a relation, Frank,—a distant one, I own.

FRANK. But poor! that is the point. We live in a practical age, Kate—an age which worships Mammon, and the question always is, not whom you have married, but how much? The answer in my case is nothing!

KATE. Am I nothing?

FRANK. Yes, from that point of view; from mine you are wealthy, because you possess beauty, and, better still, a fond, loving heart. If you had had as large an amount in the Funds and so on as Miss Hellingham has, there would have been no difficulty whatever, and my father would have been the first to approve my choice.

KATE. I acknowledge that your motives for keeping our marriage a secret from him are strong.

FRANK. You see he has set his heart on my marrying this heiress,—a namby-pamby girl you may be sure, for she has received the fashionable education of three London seasons.

KATE. But you have seen her?

FRANK. Many years ago now, when she was a fair specimen enough of a girl; but Society soon knocks all notions of truth and honor out of its devotees.

KATE. Why should you think so?

FRANK. I have seen it,—I have lived in it, and I fled from it before my nature was utterly contaminated.

KATE. Your father is always kind and affectionate towards you—

FRANK. Pshaw! when he has made up his mind about anything, he's as obstinate as a mule. I verily believe that if he learnt our secret he would turn us out of the house with as little compunction as he would his gardeners or his stablemen.

KATE. What shall we do, then?

FRANK. Let things take their course; something may turn up favourable to us.

KATE. Ah! dear, you are of that sanguine temperament that looks to time and not to yourself to clear things for you.

FRANK. Well, we can't hit upon any plan, so let's drop the subject. Do you know the Honorable Charles Raffler is coming here to stay?

KATE. Yes, I heard Miss Chillingwood speaking of it. He comes at your invitation, I think?

FRANK. Yes, he showed me some civilities in town, so I desire to return them.

KATE. And his friend, Mr. Thomas—

FRANK. What! little Tom Tufthunt? Oh, yes, he'll come too. He's Charlie's shadow,—lends him money—rides his horses, and so Charlie gives him his countenance. The arrantest little toady in the kingdom! A chandler's son, I believe, though he won't admit it. Dearly loves a lord,—you'll find him excellent fun.

KATE. Ah! I wish our position was happily explained, Frank.

FRANK. Confound it! you're returning to that. I'll—

KATE. Hush! here's Baby.

*Enter BABY*

FRANK. Well, Baby?

BABY. Hullo, Frank! Thank goodness they haven't cleared away breakfast; I've an appetite like a—I don't know what!

KATE. I thought you felt poorly after last night's debauch.

BABY. Just on waking,—that's all. I pitched into the supper, you know, like anything! First with Bob Bickers—you know Bob? Jolly fellow's Bob.

KATE. Why he's only fifteen, Baby; a year younger than you.

BABY. So he may be, but he's a jolly fellow, is Bob. Goodness! didn't Bob eat! and so did I—of everything. We pulled a cracker; here's the motto, I'll read it to you—

" Lov'd of my soul! this heart of mine  
I give to thee—oh, give me thine;  
But if thou wilt not deign to take it  
Thy cruel words, I fear, will"—

Ah! here's a bit torn off; I suppose it's "bake it"—"shake it" no "break it." I think I'll marry Bob.

KATE. Nonsense, Baby; he's too young.

BABY. Oh! I told him I would, you know,—I ought to keep my promise. Let me see, I think I said the same to Billy Norris.

FRANK. What! another sweetheart?

BABY. Well, you know, I haven't made up my mind which I'll take yet. Let me have some breakfast, though.

KATE. What about lessons to-day, Baby?

BABY. Oh! bother them. Kate, I'm like one of those fine Tories of the old time, who hated the French,—only, I don't hate them so much as their language. Why they can't speak English, I don't know! No lessons to-day,—besides I've a letter to write.

FRANK. A letter! To whom?

BABY. You won't tell, will you? It's to Dick—old Irollope's son. It's very likely I'll marry Dick—we pull well together, you know.

KATE. But I thought it was to be either Bob or Billy.

BABY. Well, you see I've got three irons in the fire, and I don't want to get rid of any of them. Dick sent me some verses, and I'm trying to write him a poetical letter. I haven't got far, though; you listen: (*Reading*)

" Dear Dick! I've got your note  
Which to me you wrote;  
I like your verses very much  
Never before did I see such,  
So I write these in return  
Which I hope you'll—

what rhymes with "turn"?

FRANK. Burn!

BABY. No! that won't do. I don't care whether he burns them or not,—I'm under age, you know. I'll try again after breakfast. You ask Aunt, Kate, to let me off my lessons to-day; plead for me,—say I'm very bad after last night,—anything.

KATE. Well, I'll try.

FRANK. Come, Kate, we'll go into the garden and ask her.

BABY. That's a good fellow!

[*Exeunt KATE and FRANK through window*

Oh! I am hungry—I could eat up everything! I think I'll pitch into the ham first, and then—what's here? muffins!—Oh! I'll have some muffins. (*Enter FOOTMAN*) Hallo! what do you want?

FOOT. To clear away, Miss.

BABY. But I'm only just going to begin.

FOOT. Can't help it, Miss; Miss Chillingwood has given me the orders.

BABY. Bother Aunt!

FOOT. Very well, Miss; but I must take the things away.

BABY. Well, I'll have something, anyhow, in spite of you and Aunt (*snatching a muffin*). Take the things away, James; take 'em away, my man. You needn't wait any longer for me.

FOOT. I shan't!

BABY. And you may tell Aunt that I don't care a fig for her, and shall do just what I please! (*Exit FOOTMAN with tray*) A fine thing, indeed, if I can't do as I like!

*Enter Miss CHILLINGWOOD from garden through window, with garden hat, gloves and trowel.*

MISS C. Heyday! What! munching at this time of day!

BABY. Why shouldn't I?

MISS C. Why? When I was a child, if I were not down to breakfast at the proper time I had nothing.

BABY. What a good memory you have, Aunt!

MISS C. Why, minx?

BABY. To remember things that happened such a long, long time ago.

MISS C. You shall be sent to school, Miss, until you learn better manners.

BABY. I shall never learn them from you, that's certain!

MISS C. I could box your ears, child

BABY. You could,—but you won't!

MISS C. Why not?

BABY. Because I'll kick you, if you do.

MISS C. Very well! I'll tell your father, Miss.

BABY. You do, and I'll tell him how I saw you trying to spoon the new curate.

MISS C. You wicked child! where do you expect to go to?

BABY. Where you never will,—and that's to the altar, some day!

MISS C. A husband, indeed, will you!

BABY. Ay, half-a-dozen if I like,—one down, t'other come on!

MISS C. Oh! you dreadful girl!

BABY. Am I? What are you?

MISS C. You will apologise to me for this!

BABY. Don't you wish you may get it!

MISS C. I shall expect it.

BABY. So you may,—there's nothing like living in a state of hopeful expectation. You'll get it about the same time that the new curate swallows your bait.

MISS C. I shall leave you, Miss.

BABY. Thank you kindly! You wanted me to dress like you for the Race ball, so that we might pass off for sisters,—I knew what you wanted! Pooh! do you think any man could be such a fool as to believe it? *fol de rol de rol!* (*Aside*) She won't get over that very quickly; it's my victory this time.

MISS C. You will repent this!



*Enter SIR GEOFFREY, with "Times," and a letter*

SIR G. Faith, madam, you appear to be in an irritable humor this morning! After having successfully routed me from the room by the violence of your tongue, you are now engaged in a battle with my daughter. This comes of your quarrelsome temperament.

MISS C. Sir Geoffrey, it is scarcely for you to speak of my quarrelsome temperament, when you know yours is unbearable! The malice you display is positively frightful, and—mark my word!—if it is not checked, you will one day be carried off by an apoplectic fit, or the bursting of a blood vessel!

SIR G. And if it happen, madam, you may safely blame yourself as the cause, for you are ever finding a pretext to open up a quarrel.

MISS C. I, indeed!

SIR G. And the strangeness of the matter is that you invariably take the wrong side, and decline altogether to yield to my reason.

MISS C. Don't say "reason" Sir Geoffrey, for you have none.

SIR G. Gad, madam, I have ten times as much reason as you have! (*To BABY*) See Baby, she is even now attempting to fix a quarrel on me.

MISS C. Indeed! Well, if you have, you conceal it so well that no one gives you credit for any.

SIR G. Unlike your perversity, madam, for you exhibit it in all its nakedness!

MISS C. Hush, Sir; remember the presence of your daughter, if you can.

SIR G. Good heavens! you are enough to spoil the most angelic temper with your eternal bickerings. I will put up with it no longer! You—you—you—

MISS C. Now, Sir Geoffrey, restrain yourself!

SIR G. Restrain myself! D—e, why don't you keep cool, like I do; you must needs become violent, as if violence can mend your logic. (*To BABY*) Take warning, Baby, by your aunt's infirmity.

BABY. I trust, papa, that aunt's temper may become meliorated by age; she is young yet.

SIR G. Ha! ha! The men don't seem to think so!

BABY. I think some good may result from your frequent disputes.

SIR G. What is that?

BABY. She may learn to keep cool,—like you do.

SIR G. Very good indeed! Coolness is a great blessing in these cases. By-the-by, why aren't you out? Wouldn't you like a ride?

BABY. Oh, may I, papa?

MISS C. Lessons!

SIR G. We'll let you off to-day. There, go, if you like, and tell Henry to be careful of you.

BABY. All right! (*Aside*) The reward of "coolness"—a compliment is never lost!

MISS G. I thought you were old enough, Sir Geoffrey, to know the value of a compliment proceeding from a girl of your daughter's age.

SIR G. I frankly own, madam, I like a compliment, and I

prefer them to proceed from young people—of the female sex. I can well imagine that your ideas on the subject of compliments—

MISS C. Pray, spare your words! I have no ideas on the subject.

SIR G. My own opinion, madam! Your views must necessarily be limited when compliments do not at all fall in your way.

MISS C. Sir Geoffrey, you are insulting! I wonder I am still alive after your treatment. It is enough to kill any woman.

SIR G. Except yourself.

MISS C. Don't be too sure; I shall go soon, I dare say.

SIR G. Don't raise false hopes!

MISS C. I'll not put up with this treatment longer,—I shall leave you.

SIR G. I have lost all hope of that blessing happening!

MISS C. I am in earnest.

SIR G. I am glad to hear it, madam. You came here on the understanding that you were to stay three weeks, and have stayed five years! The shorter period would have been preferable to me.

MISS C. Ah! you will be sorry when I am gone; you will miss me.

SIR G. That's true, madam, and we shall have peace again!

MISS C. I shake the dust of this place from my feet.

SIR G. Outside, if you please,—there's a mat there!

MISS C. Nothing shall make me return.

SIR G. I assure you no attempt shall be made. And now, perhaps, you will allow me to be alone for a time.

[*Exit MISS CHILLINGWOOD*  
(*Taking up "Times," and seating himself at table.*) I think the enemy has retired defeated, although by this time to-morrow she will have collected her scattered forces and will renew the attack. (*Striking table-gong.*) As to her leaving the house, of course that's ridiculous; she has been going to do that any time these five years. She's a fine mettlesome woman—I admire a mettlesome woman.

*Enter FOOTMAN*

FOOT. Yes, Sir.

SIR G. Charles, bring me my cough mixture from my room.

FOOT. Yes, Sir.

SIR G. Public speaking destroys the voice, unless carefully nurtured. It appears strange to me that I should always get the better of my sister in our arguments; but then, of course, she lacks my good humor—my coolness—my sense—

*Enter FOOTMAN*

FOOT. You have none left, Sir.

SIR G. Very well; I must get some more, although I cannot account for its having gone so soon, without being wasted.

FOOT. There wasn't much of it from the first, Sir.

SIR G. Ah! nor there was. That will do. Ah, by-the-by, I think I left a letter in my study; bring it to me, and tell Arnold I want him.

FOOT. Yes, Sir,

SIR G. (*Whilst talking, he uses extravagant gestures, as if speaking publicly.*) These qualities, of good humor, coolness, and sense

have won me my position in parliament, and are acknowledged by all who have the privilege of listening to me,—no, not the privilege, perhaps,—however, let that pass. (*Rising*). One great point in my favour is that I possess the merit of brevity. I never speak for more than two hours and a half—some will go on in a tedious style for a whole two hours and three quarters! I possess the talent of reasoning with perspicuity—no one requests or even requires me to repeat the same idea twice! Where is the seat of this talent? Is it here (*pointing to stomach*), here (*heart*), or here (*forehead*)?

*Enter FOOTMAN*

FOOT. No, it isn't there, Sir.

SIR G. Isn't it, Charles,—well, where is it?

FOOT. I think it's nowhere, Sir, unless—oh! it's in your hand, Sir.

*Enter ARNOLD*

SIR G. Ah! so it is! put it in the post bag, Charles; be careful with it, for it's an important communication to the *Times* on the new Act for Elementary Education. I haven't read the Act yet, but I dare say there are points in the letter that will attract attention.

FOOT. Yes, Sir. *[Exit]*

SIR G. Ah, Arnold, sit down. Let me see: there was some letter I wished to write.

ARN. Yes; on the present state of the Army.

SIR G. To be sure! It's a subject I have never studied, but I believe I can throw upon it a few enlightened thoughts. (*Rising*) The Army—hem!—the Army is now—a—a standing—a—a—hem! I remember, too, there was a pamphlet I wished to write on the Church of England.

ARN. Yes, there was.

SIR G. Ah, I must leave it—for another time. By-the-by, have you made out the memoranda for my Speech on the opening of the County Market Hall on Friday next?

ARN. Yes. I have framed a speech in the usual manner, and have placed the adjectives that are applicable in the margin. Three and four syllabled ones.

SIR G. Quite right; it's an important occasion.

ARN. (*With paper*.) Thus: the outline, "I feel pride in meeting my constituents, on such an occasion as the present," etcetera. With adjectives filled in, thus: "I feel singular pride, excessive pride, pardonable pride"—which you please—"in meeting my intelligent constituents, esteemed constituents, intellectual constituents, on such a pleasurable occasion, important occasion, significant occasion as the present," and so on.

SIR G. (*Nodding his head*.) Quite right! A word without a good adjective before it is like a gun loaded with ball only,—it won't go off well.

ARN. And I bring in the following words: Pragmatical, prerogative, contrariety, correlative, antithesis, rodomontade, and others of equal importance and sound, besides one Greek and three Latin phrases.

SIR G. Very good; it will keep up my character for learning.

ARN. And on the occasion of the presentation to the village of a Fire Engine,—no one of any importance will be there,—I have



confined myself to two-syllabled adjectives, and words of ordinary comprehensibleness.

SIR G. Quite right. There should be a distinction between a speech delivered to an assemblage of gentlemen, and one to a body of tradesmen. It should be suited to the intellectual capacity of the audience. A—I shall have to answer a letter that appears in to-day's *Times* on the Licensing Question. I think the *Times* should be obliged to me, for I must add somewhat to its circulation. That will do, Arnold, for the present. [Exit ARNOLD]

Yes, this letter must certainly be answered! I—I really cannot understand it. We live in a glorious country, governed by a constitutional sovereign; we are, as a nation, the most favoured on earth, and yet there are some people who will not be satisfied! they are ever wanting something more than they have! Now, I want nothing! My name is distinguished,—to be sure, I deserve to be raised a step higher for my devotion to the government; my estate is broad,—it might be more arable, perhaps, but I am perfectly content with circumstances. But here is an Englishman signing himself Brutus who raises note after note of complaint—against what? The actions of a government, which, being Tory, should be allowed to pass unassailed. Brutus, indeed! Wasn't Brutus the man who was killed by Cæsar? Brutus, indeed! Some poor and uneducated Whig—they are all poor and uneducated who talk about progress! I wish I had Brutus before me now, that I might catechise him, and endeavour to instil a little common sense into him!

*Enter TOM TUFFHUNT by window*

TOM. Hullo! Catch hold, Guv'nor! (*throwing a small portmanteau to SIR GEOFFREY.*) Hit one of your corns? Ha! ha! never mind.

SIR G. Who are you, eh?

TOM. A good fellow, sir,—Tom Tuffhunt.

SIR G. How did you come here?

TOM. Through the window, my boy—took a short cut across the grounds.

SIR G. Humph! I believe you are expected here, sir?

TOM. Of course. I was to come with my friend the Honourable Charley Raffler, third son of the late Lord Beggerly.

SIR G. Where is he?

TOM. Lord Beggerly? In his grave, I hope.

SIR G. No, no; Mr. Raffler.

TOM. Oh, Charley? He couldn't leave town to-day, old buck, so follows in a day or two. Making up his book.

SIR G. Is he literary, then?

TOM. Literary? No. His book on the "Derby."

SIR G. Sporting, then?

TOM. I believe you; so am I.

SIR G. You look so.

TOM. Yes; devilish good rig this, isn't it? Horsey, eh?

SIR G. Very! I shouldn't know you for a groom in undress.

TOM. Wouldn't you, though! Well, I believe it is O.K.; tight trousers, loose coat, stiff whiskers, and white hat! Copied it from the head groom of the "Crack" Stud.

SIR G. You have a natural inclination for sport?

TOM. Have I—have I not! Lay you 2 to 1 bar 1 on the double event! Hey! that's your ticket!

SIR G. I am sorry, sir, that never having studied betting as a fine art, I cannot accept your offer.

TOM. Come, you don't look a bad 'un, I'll put you up to a good thing. Back the Camaroso filly for the Bloomshire Stakes. That's the tip!

SIR G. I don't bet, sir.

TOM. Don't bet! How do you manage to live?

SIR G. You seem to appreciate it.

TOM. Ah! betted all my life! Betted in my cradle that my mother's next 'un would be a boy. Betted in school, out of school, everywhere! Bet on anything and everything! Come, I'll bet you—I've one on just like it with the Duke—I'll bet you you'll be underground before the end of next year.

SIR G. Sir!—

TOM. Why not? D——e, I've left you fourteen months to live! Can't be much of you left then! I'll bet you the other way, if you like. Come, we'll seal the bet over a glass. By-the-by, that reminds me I'm devilishly dry, and want a sustainer. Where's the guv'nor?

SIR G. Who?

TOM. The guv'nor—Sir Geoffrey.

SIR G. Sir Geoffrey! (*Pretending.*) Oh, ah, Sir—Sir Geoffrey—yes; I believe he's in the house somewhere.

TOM. Good fellow, eh?

SIR G. So, so.

TOM. Prosy, I believe. D——d fond of wagging his tongue!

SIR G. Sir, really—

TOM. Ah, yes; one of your loquacious M.P.'s; always airing some d——d stupid nonsense or other.

SIR G. You're too severe.

TOM. Not I. You're the butler, I suppose—look like a family butler—purple nose, et cetera. No offence! Here, put it away! (*Slipping half-a-crown into Sir Geoffrey's hand, who looks amazed.*) I've heard a few things about your master.

SIR G. Have you?

TOM. I've heard—between us, you know—that he finds it d——d hard to make both ends meet.

SIR G. Indeed!

TOM. Oh, yes. Young Lord Sparrow—you know Dick?

SIR G. No.

TOM. Ah! He and I were talking of Sir Geoffrey the other day. Says I, "I visit him next week," says he, "A word of advice—don't bring in the name of the late Lady Chillingwood; they say she led him a cat-and-dog's life, and died simply out of spite, because he wouldn't go off before her."

SIR G. Ha! ha! very pleasant and kind of my lord.

TOM. Oh, Lord Sparrow and I are bosom friends. But about Sir Geoffrey. I've heard there's good living and fellowship here.

SIR G. From whom?

TOM. Eh? I believe the Duke. No, 'twasn't—'twas old Harry, the Bishop.

SIR G. Bishop, eh?

TOM. Yes. Bishop of Punkatoo—Colonial Bishop—a deuce of a man with the bottle. Says he, "You may make your mind easy about going. Tom, the liquor's good and plentiful. Geoffrey, I'll engage, never found his way to bed on his own legs for the last twenty years.

SIR G. Sir—sir, this is scandalous!

TOM. Ay, so it may be, but I believe it true.

SIR G. You do?

TOM. Yes, I always believe the worst of a man I don't know.

SIR G. And of those who have the honor of your acquaintance—

TOM. I know 'em well enough to believe the worst that can be said of 'em.

SIR G. Then, there are no good people in the world?

TOM. I've never come across any, in your sense of the word "good." I know the world, my boy; lived among the tip-top bucks all my life; sown bushels of wild oats—had no time to reap an ear.

SIR G. You should husband them, then.

TOM. Husband, eh? D——e, is that a joke?

SIR G. A joke! (*Aside.*) A member of Parliament make a joke!

TOM. Faith, you remind me of Black Peter—Sir Bunbury Trott's nigger—always trying to make jokes.

SIR G. I—I like Sir Trunbury Botts—hem! Sir Bunbury Trott's Black Peter! I make a joke! I'd as soon be a pig at once!

TOM. Well, copy your master and stick to your heavy prose,—then you'll only be a bore!

SIR G. I suppose, sir,—I suppose you will not allow Sir Geoffrey any good points?

TOM. Good points! Faith, his points are all stops! One never hears of a person's good points—they are unworthy of notice. I haven't by any means told you the worst of him yet. For instance—

SIR G. Pray, sir, you wouldn't have a servant listen to reflections on his master's character?

TOM. He hasn't one, my buck,—it's been made away with long ago. Well, they say—

SIR G. Sir, I cannot stay any longer. Sir Geoffrey shall know you are here.

TOM. What! won't you hear any more of your master?

SIR G. No, sir, not a word.

TOM. But I haven't told you the worst yet.

SIR G. I care not.

TOM. Five minutes—

SIR G. Not an instant!

[*Tearing himself away.*] *Exit*

TOM. D——n the fellow! I had the most exquisite lie on my lips, that would have made his hair stand on end for his master's sake. A servant won't listen to abuse against his master! why, 'tis a

miracle, and he—an abortion of nature! I always make a point of informing every servant of mine that there isn't a greater rascal under the sun than myself; then, he knows the worst! It's to be hoped the old butler won't repeat my observations to Sir Geoffrey, for there's nothing more unpleasant than having to eat one's words. Ha!

BABY. (*Outside.*) Let me come and see him too, Aunt,—well, I will!

*Enter AUNT, followed by BABY, ogling TOM behind*

MISS C. Sir Geoffrey will be here presently, sir; in the meantime allow me to have the pleasure of welcoming you. [*Sitting*

BABY. And me too!

[*Miss C. gives her a look*

TOM. (*Bowing*) You do me—great honor, Ma'am, I assure you.

MISS C. Pray be seated.

TOM. (*Sitting; aside*) What shall I say? Never could talk well with old women!

MISS C. Do you make a long stay?

BABY. Oh, yes, I hope.

TOM. Oh, yes—long stay—think of settling here atog—

No. (*Aside.*) What subjects can I talk about? There's—

MISS C. Have you come alone?

TOM. (*Musing.*) There's—there's the fashions.

MISS C. Sir! I believe Mr. Raffler was expected to accompany you?

TOM. Yes, ma'am,—there's the theatres.

MISS C. What does he mean?

BABY. Why doesn't he look up?

MISS C. Has he not come?

TOM. No, ma'am. (*Aside.*) Bother! I can recollect nothing! She doesn't look so d——d aristocratic and peculiar, though; here I go, then. (*Aloud.*) No, ma'am; he comes in a few days,—a week at the most. I merely precede him. Charley and I are great chums—in fact, we are seldom apart; we're called the dog and his shadow,—Charley's the dog, and I'm the shadow. T'other day, Viscount Sangpeur met me alone, and, says he, "Why, Tom, what's become of Charley, for you generally stick to him like a leech?" Ha! Ha!

MISS C. Is he clever?

TOM. No, ma'am, neither of us are clever,—except in our own way. But in that, few beat us.

MISS C. And what is that, Sir?

TOM. Horseflesh, ma'am.

MISS C. Dear me, how strange; you are interested in the problem, whether it is eatable by mankind.

TOM. Eatable? No, driveable or rideable, I mean. If you had seen us last week on the cup day; Charley handling the reins—four as spanking tits as you can find—slap-up animals—and I behind with the horn! Gad! That's a taste of mine, too—music; I can hold my own on the horn, kettledrum, or penny whistle. (*To BABY*) Won't you sit down?

BABY. Thank you, Sir.

MISS C. Oh, she's only a child—she can stand.

BABY. I want to sit down.

TOM. Take my chair. (*Rising and moving to another chair beside her.*)

MISS C. You have not seen Sir Geoffrey?

TOM. No, ma'am; I haven't had the pleasure yet. They say he's a jolly old buck—hem!—gentleman!

MISS C. I will go and fetch him. You will excuse my leaving you for a moment.

TOM. With pleasure—hem—that is—hem! [*Exit Miss C.*]

BABY. (*Facing Tom.*) I say, how do you like her?

TOM. Fine old girl!

BABY. Is she, though?

TOM. Well, perhaps on second thoughts—

BABY. What's your name?

TOM. Tufthunt!

BABY. Yes, but your Christian name?

TOM. Tom.

BABY. Tom? I like the name, Tom.

TOM. And what's yours?

BABY. Nelly, really; but they call me Baby.

TOM. I like Baby best.

BABY. You may call me Baby, if you like, and I'll—I'll call you—

TOM. Call me, Tom. Well, Baby, why the deuce doesn't my old friend the butler bring in the liquor?

BABY. Butler? You couldn't have seen the butler!

TOM. Yes, surely. Elderly man, gray hair and whiskers, with a pimple on his nose,—regular old toper, he looks—and gorgeous in a white waistcoat, and—

BABY. Why, that's papa!

TOM. (*Rising.*) What! Sir Geoffrey?

BABY. Yes.

TOM. Oh, d—e, I'm in for it. I—I think I'll take a stroll in the garden before I meet him.

BABY. Come along, then; (*rising*) let's go and have a lark.

TOM. Gad! I've had one, thank you, with Sir Geoffrey already!

BABY. Come along, there's a good fellow.

[*Pulling him by arm towards window*]

TOM. I say, Baby.

BABY. Well, Tom?

[*Exeunt through window, talking*]

*Enter Miss CHILLINGWOOD*

MISS C. Mr.—a—dear me, where is he? (*Calling*) Mr. Tufthunt! He's gone,—and with that little minx, Baby. It's a ridiculous thing that that child should always contrive to have the first word with every male stranger that comes here! The times are indeed changed when men prefer a little chit like her to a woman of—of—

*Enter FOOTMAN.*

FOOT. Sir Hector is coming up the drive, madam.

MISS C. La! Show him in here. (*Exit FOOTMAN.*) If ever man was a riddle, Sir Hector is. Fond of female society, yet he is stricken dumb when he and I are alone; but let another person enter, and his tongue becomes loosed at once. I am sure he admires me, for, when we were first acquainted, he dressed abomin-



ably, whereas now he never appears twice in the same suit. In company, he singles me out by his attentions; but alone, no one can be more frigid. Is he afraid of proposing, or is it that he requires a little encouragement? Immediately he enters, and sees that I am alone, he will become mute; perhaps a little encouragement may help him. I will try. Here he is.

(*She pretends to be busily employed as SIR HECTOR enters. He exclaims "Alone!" and appears half inclined to retreat. However, he approaches her quietly, and endeavours to face her,—she turning, so that he is always behind her*)

SIR H. A-ahem! (*nervously.*)

MISS C. (*Turning round.*) La! Sir Hector! How you startled me! As if I could have expected to see you, and yet—I must own—you were in my thoughts. Dear me! My nerves, Sir Hector, are so sensitive and give way at the slightest shock! Dear me! My heart goes pit-a-pat! Would you let me lean on your arm for a moment?

SIR H. (*Nervously.*) Ah—pleased, indeed! (*She walks him slowly up and down.*)

MISS C. Strange, Sir Hector, that these nervous fits are never so bad as when brought on by your arrival.

SIR H. A—yes—very (*Tries to disengage himself.*)

MISS C. Oh, dear! Pray, Sir Hector, don't remove your arm.

SIR H. But, madam, consider—

MISS C. Oh, Sir Hector, let all the world see us, what does it matter?

SIR H. But this delicate posture, madam, may be construed—

MISS C. How?

SIR H. I can't tell.

MISS C. I am getting better now; these nervous fits are dreadful. Let me tell you another strange fact, Sir Hector.

SIR H. Pray, madam, don't put yourself—

MISS C. Oh! but you must hear it. You know, Sir Hector, a few years ago, when quite a mere girl, I was engaged to be married—to be united in the bonds of holy matrimony—to a young man,—he was a sailor, Sir Hector,—but—ah, unhappy fate!—he was taken away from me.

SIR H. Taken away?

MISS C. Yes.

SIR H. By order of the Admiralty?

MISS C. No,—by death.

SIR H. Oh!

MISS C. Well, before he declared his passion, I could never hear his step without palpitation and nervousness.

SIR H. Oh!

MISS C. But I tire you; let us sit down. (*They seat themselves.*) Of course, you men, Sir Hector,—you big, blustering, impetuous creatures,—cannot understand a woman's natural nervousness, when she is in the presence of the man she l—a—hem! dear me, how indiscreet!

SIR H. (*Rising hastily.*) Why, I declare it's—

MISS C. What?

SIR H. No, it isn't!

MISS C. What?

SIR H. Raining.

MISS C. Pooh! don't let us bother about the weather,—we can surely find a better topic than that.

SIR H. Crops are looking well.

MISS C. I'm glad to hear it, but——

SIR H. Farmers, perhaps, will be satisfied.

MISS C. Dear me, Sir Hector, what does it matter to us if they are unsatisfied. Do, Sir Hector, relate to me a few of your stirring adventures during your career at sea; I am such an admirer of sailors. Do, Sir Hector?

SIR H. I should weary you, Madam (*looking at his watch*)—Goodness it's——

MISS C. Seat yourself, Sir Hector, and begin. Dear me, it will seem as if Othello and Desdemona were come to life again.

SIR H. Lord forbid, Madam!

MISS C. Did he not win her by the relation of his adventures?

SIR H. Really, Madam, I——

MISS C. Oh, Sir Hector, how she must have loved him! Love! Ah, what is love, Sir Hector?

SIR H. Somebody has defined him “a little boy, without breeches,” Madam.

MISS C. (*Rising.*) Sir Hector, really!——

SIR H. (*Aside.*) Ha! ha! ha! she had her answer. Here comes Sir Geoffrey; I am myself again. [*Enter SIR GEOFFREY*

SIR G. Ha! Sir Hector, how are you this fine spring day? My sister, I hope, has been amusing you?

SIR H. Yes, Miss Chillingwood and I have had the most delightful conversation; really, Miss Chillingwood has the gift of making her conversation most interesting.

SIR G. Ay, it runs in our family,—among the males especially. What a healthy look! Why one would think you were only forty, instead of——

SIR H. Ahem! Yes. But you made up for it, by looking double your age. That comes of being a public man.

SIR G. Why, yes. By-the-by, here's a little tract of mine on the latest phase of the Education Question. Read it when you get home; you'll like it, I think. We public men have to go through a great deal, and get little thanks.

MISS C. And those often above your deserts.

SIR H. Oh, Miss Chillingwood, you're too severe. No praise can be too strong for those who voluntarily give up their best hours, to sit in a bad atmosphere and hear——

MISS C. Worse speeches!

SIR G. Now, now, Sir Hector, you put that into her mouth, and she's only too ready to seize on anything that can cause me annoyance. Bad speeches there are, no doubt; but we have among us some fine rhetoricians! There's, for instance, Parker—Smith—a—Brown—a——

SIR H. Yourself.

SIR G. Oh, really—a—really, I'm afraid I've little claim, although I certainly do manage to create a stir occasionally.

MISS C. Yes,—always when you rise to speak.

SIR G. Why, when I rise?

MISS C. They're so anxious to get away.

SIR G. Now, indeed, Betsy——

SIR H. Ha! ha! That reminds me of an anecdote I once heard. A man, having been to one of the annual fairs, saw another man, a—another man—

SIR G. Yes, proceed.

SIR H. I forgot! It's scarcely fit for ladies' ears.

MISS C. Sir Hector!

SIR H. I ask your pardon.

SIR G. Where's our visitor, Betsy? Do you know—ha! ha!—he mistook me for the butler, and related some little particulars about myself that amused me wonderfully. Where is he?

MISS C. I don't know.

SIR G. And Baby?

MISS C. With him, probably; her ride was postponed.

SIR G. Hollo!

*Enter BABY, running hard, with TOM behind her in full chase.*  
*They come up stage.*

BABY. I sha'n't play any more!

TOM. Why not?

BABY. Because you cheat!

TOM. Cheat! I played fair enough!

BABY. Why did you take my penny away?

TOM. Don't bawl so loud!

BABY. I want my penny.

TOM. I don't care for the penny, but, d—e, it was a fair catch!

BABY. Give me my penny, or else I'll—

TOM. Well?

BABY. Tell pa you've been teaching me to play pitch and toss!

TOM. You wouldn't peach, would you, Baby?

BABY. Peach! No, Tom, I'm not a sneak!

SIR G. (*Behind.*) Baby!

MISS C. Baby!

SIR G. Allow me to address her.

MISS C. Oh! pray don't fatigue us. Mr. Tufthunt, allow me to present you to—

*Enter FRANK and KATE by window.*

FRANK. The carriage is here.

SIR G. Where?

FRANK. At the house. There goes the bell. (*Aside.*) I shall hate that woman, Kate!

KATE. (*Aside.*) Oh, no; you must be kind and attentive to her.

SIR G. Now, let us give her a greeting. A young friend of mine, Sir Hector; young, beautiful, rich—

SIR H. Hem! I must know her.

MISS C. (*to Sir H.*) She is to be married to Frank,—that's the programme.

SIR H. By-the-by, that reminds me—

SIR G. Let me address her a few choice words, that shall be—

MISS C. Rubbish!

SIR G. Betsy!

*FOOTMAN enters; behind him MISS BELLINGHAM*

FOOT. (*Announcing*) Miss Bellingham!

[*She bows to Company*

END OF ACT I.



## ACT II.

(A WEEK HAS ELAPSED.)

SCENE. *Same as in Act I. KATE and BABY discovered seated, working.*

BABY. Do you like Tom, Kate?

KATE. How you do run on on that subject, Baby; it is the same all day. "Tom" is on your lips from morning till night.

BABY. Is he, though! not so often as that,—now and then in the shrubberies, perhaps.

KATE. Oh, Baby, how can you! I blush for you.

BABY. Keep your blushes for yourself, I don't want them.

KATE. Why do you allow him to kiss you?

BABY. Because I mayn't kiss him, I suppose. But really, do you like Tom?

KATE. Well,—he's amusing.

BABY. Oh! isn't he! He told me such a lot of funny stories yesterday. Go on.

KATE. Well, I think he's very pleasant and agreeable.

BABY. That he is! Go on.

KATE. And full of harmless fun.

BABY. Ye-es (*laughing*)—oh, ye-es! You draw him to the life, Kate. Go on.

KATE. Perhaps he's a little rough and unrefined.

BABY. Rough, Kate! I don't think you are correct there!

KATE. Well, he may be a fair specimen of the British youth of the present day, but his conversation occasionally appears to me to be rather vulgar and slangy.

BABY. Oh, Kate! Vulgar and slangy! Why, I think his conversation beautiful,—it is so forcible; and though he does swear sometimes, he does it with such a pretty grace! Oh, you are quite wrong about his conversation, Kate!

KATE. Am I? I'm afraid you see him *couleur de rose*.BABY. Ah! (*Aside.*) I don't know what that means, but I won't say so.

KATE. Well, let us drop Tom now, and talk about—

BABY. Oh, no; don't let us drop Tom. Poor Tom! Tom's a nobleman, Kate.

KATE. In your mind, perhaps.

BABY. No, I meant to say he was very near being a nobleman; he was telling me yesterday. He said if his mamma hadn't married his papa, she might have hooked (that's Tom's word) a Lord Somebody. But then, where would Tom have been? I never thought of that.

KATE. It's a complicated problem, Baby.

BABY. Yes; but, I say, Tom's very fond of me, Kate.

KATE. Indeed; why he's only known you a week.

BABY. Well, isn't a week long enough? I grew very fond of that Dick Trollope in two days,—I don't care about him, now.

KATE. But how do you know he's very fond of you?

BABY. Why, Kate, you ought to know the signs,—every woman ought to know: he's always trying to make me eat something.

KATE. Is that a sign?

BABY. Oh, a very good one. Then, he doesn't eat much himself. I think he's getting thin,—do you notice it, Kate?

KATE. Not in the least.

BABY. I'm so relieved. Well, then he's always coming after me.

KATE. That's better.

BABY. And he's always pressing my hand.

KATE. Oh!

BABY. And—and—he told me so.

KATE. (*Laughing.*) You might have placed that reason first.

BABY. He came and played, "Poor Mary Ann" and "Rule Britannia" on a penny flute under my window last night; and Aunt heard it, and popped her head out of the window, and asked who was making that horrible noise below, and threatened him with the police, and—oh! he did play so melancholy, Kate!

KATE. And are you fond of him, Baby?

BABY. He! he! Well, yes—I like him! What do you think, Kate? Don't say a word, if I tell you! Tom pretends to have fallen in love with Aunt, so that she may suspect nothing between us. You know she's always bothering after me, and so—as Tom says—that will put her off the scent.

KATE. Very well, Baby,—a pretty little plot, indeed! and suppose I were to whisper to your Aunt that the attentions paid her by a certain young man of the name of Tufthunt were—

BABY. I know you wouldn't, Kate! I'm sure there's no love lost between you and Aunt. (*By window*) Here's Miss Bellingham coming in from the garden. Do you like her, Kate?

KATE. Why?

BABY. I don't—I detest her!

KATE. Indeed!

BABY. I think she's got some design against Tom.

KATE. Nonsense, Baby, she seldom speaks to him.

BABY. Ay, but you know Tom met her in London, when he went about with his friend the Honorable Charley Raffler, and Tom thinks she was rather struck by his appearance, as she was always looking at him, and making sarcastic remarks about him.

KATE. A strange way of showing love; oh, no, Baby, you may be sure Miss Bellingham will not attempt to deprive you of Tom's affection.

BABY. But you don't like her, Kate, do you?

KATE. I have no reason to dislike her. She is rather cold and dignified, but that is solely the fault of her education.

BABY. Well, for my part—

KATE. 'Sh!

*Enter CLARA BELLINGHAM by window.*

CLARA. Dear me! how bracing the air is! I had no idea the country was so charming.

BABY. Haven't you been in the country before?

CLARA. Not for a year or more.

BABY. Well, wasn't it charming then?

CLARA. How can I recall the sensations of a year ago, child!

BABY. Isn't your memory good?

CLARA. I have no memory, child; my thoughts are of the future, not of the past. Memory is an excellent thing for school-girls, who are expected to remember all sorts of fatiguing facts about old kings and countries.

BABY. (*Aside*) That's meant for me! How I wish I had a saucy tongue!

KATE. The dinner hour has been altered as you wished, Clara!

CLARA. Thank you, Kate. I find it intolerable to sit down to dinner before half-past seven; I have no appetite until that hour.

BABY. But I have, though; and I prefer six o'clock to half-past-seven any day.

CLARA. Indeed! It is a pity you are not of sufficient importance to have things as you wish.

BABY. Sufficient importance! I shouldn't have sufficient cheek to upset a whole family's arrangements to suit myself.

KATE. Baby! You forget Miss Bellingham is a visitor.

CLARA. Oh, pray don't check her. She is an *enfant terrible*: a species it is one's misfortune to meet too frequently now-a-days. They are amusing, however, by their little absurdities, and do no harm. Go on, child.

BABY. I wish you wouldn't call me "child."

CLARA. Yes, I know you do.

BABY. Well, don't then! Here's Frank. (*Enter FRANK*). I'll tell him.

CLARA. Do, child.

FRANK. What is it, Baby?

BABY. Miss Bellingham will persist in calling me "child."

FRANK. Perhaps it amuses Miss Bellingham.

BABY. But I don't like it.

FRANK. Miss Bellingham is the distinguished disciple of a society that does not consider the feelings of others, so long as it can extract amusement from them.

CLARA. You are going to rail at society, again?

FRANK. No, I have done.

CLARA. Oh, I am glad, and Society has a new lease of life. Poor Society! what crimes thou hast to answer for! with vices black as night, and not one virtue to redeem thee. Is it not so?

FRANK. You are recommencing the argument.

KATE. (*To Clara*). Don't believe all Frank says.

CLARA. Pardon me, there was no necessity for that caution.

KATE. I meant to say—

FRANK. Don't, Kate, or Miss Bellingham will be giving us another specimen of politeness.

CLARA. And Society—

FRANK. Oh, if you will have it, then, I hate this Society! What are its teachings? Hypocrisy and heartlessness! Has it ever made a man more manly, or a woman more womanly?

Society is the enemy of Nature. Nature would have us lay bare our minds; Society makes us cloak them. Nature endowed us with speech to express our thoughts; Society makes us use it to conceal them. Nature bids us love our kind; Society, to envy it, if richer; to despise it, if poorer. Under Nature's teaching, we are pure and unselfish; under Society's, we learn to be envious and uncharitable. In Nature, we play the man; in Society, the hypocrite. Nature is generous; Society is heartless!

CLARA. Bravo! After such a burst of eloquence, Society must fall to pieces. One would imagine that Society had done you an injury, if one could believe you had ever lived in it. Perhaps you lost your heart, but the lady failed to perceive your merit, or her mamma compelled her to dismiss you for a more eligible *parti*.

FRANK. I see you are not ignorant of its ways.

KATE. Really, Frank, you are getting quite warm on the subject.

CLARA. Yes, that is Nature; now I, being a disciple of Society, am cool.

FRANK. I am afraid it is not in your nature to be warm in anything!

CLARA. That is it! Don't blame me; blame that bug-bear Society?

BABY. Well, this is very interesting. Hullo! here's Tom.

*Enter TOM.*

TOM. Saw Charley's turn-out coming up the drive—a slap-up turn-out too, with a dashing little mare between the shafts. You know Charley and I used—

FRANK. I'm glad he's come.

CLARA. And when will you resume your interesting tirade against Society?

FRANK. When I have an audience that I care to convince.

KATE. (*Aside.*) Frank!

FRANK. (*Aside.*) Confound her!

*Enter FOOTMAN showing in RAFFLER.*

FOOT. Mr. Raffer!

RAF. Your servant, ladies. Miss Bellingham I have had the pleasure of meeting before—

FRANK. (*Introducing KATE.*) Miss Lawrence—Mr. Raffer.

RAF. And how are you, Frank? Troublesome journey here, slow trains, dusty roads—

TOM. (*Advancing and holding out his hand.*) How are you, Charley?

RAF. What, Tom—so it is! (*Placing his hat and cane in Tom's hands and turning away.*)

BABY. (*Half aside.*) His mightiness doesn't think proper to cast his condescending eye on me at all, Tom.

RAF. (*Turning to her.*) Who is this young lady?

BABY. I'm Miss Nelly Chillingwood.

RAF. Indeed! (*Turning away and pulling off gloves, which he gives to TOM.*)

CLARA. Your visit comes quite as a surprise to me.

RAF. An agreeable one, I hope.

BABY. (*To TOM.*) He's a refrigerator, Tom. Don't you carry his things. (*Striking gong.*)

CLARA. It certainly is a surprise to me that you could be induced to leave town.

*Enter FOOTMAN.*

BABY. Take these—a—things out, young man. [*Exit FOOTMAN.*]

FRANK. And yet he accepted my invitation without hesitation.

RAF. Yes. I wanted to leave town,—creditors were becoming troublesome, they would bring their bills with them—would wait until they were paid.

KATE. So you were obliged to pay them.

RAF. Pay? oh, no; men of fashion don't pay bills,—they only run them up. Credit is one of the sweet blessings of civilization,—it ennobles the man that gives and the man that takes.

CLARA. By what manoeuvre did you escape these officious gentlemen?

RAF. A very simple one. I showed them into my sitting-room, locked the door, and came away.

KATE. And how will they get out?

RAF. Through the ceiling, most likely.

FRANK. Through the door, you mean.

RAF. Oh, no. Fire was burning in the room, and I turned on the gas before I left—horrid smell.

CLARA. Why, they'll be blown up.

RAF. Ye—es, through the ceiling—I said so.

BABY. (*To TOM.*) He doesn't say much to you, Tom, though you are friends.

TOM. He will soon, because he wants money.

BABY. And you'll lend it?

TOM. Yes.

BABY. But perhaps he won't pay you back.

TOM. Don't say 'perhaps;' my mind's quite easy on that point—I know he won't!

RAF. By-the-by, Tom, I should like to have half-a-dozen words with you, some time.

TOM. All right. How did you leave all our friends?

RAF. So so. Kitty's broken her leg.

KATE. Who?

RAF. And lost one of her eyes.

CLARA. Who?

RAF. And so they've scratched her.

CLARA. Who?

RAF. Kitty.

CLARA. And who is Kitty?

RAF. A mare.

TOM. How's your book?

RAF. Rather heavy; we'll talk of it again.

TOM. Have any of our friends been inquiring after me,—Lord Tiptop or the little Viscount, or any of them?

RAF. Well, there was a report abroad that you had cut your throat, but I didn't notice any excessive signs of grief. The Viscount remarked that you might have done worse.

TOM. Nonsense!

RAF. And Tiptop said he had always given you credit for going out of the world in quite a different fashion.

TOM. How?

RAF. With a rope—round your neck.

KATE. How dreadful!

TOM. Pshaw! You corrected the report, of course?

RAF. Well,—no; I don't think I did.

TOM. Don't think you did? Why not?

RAF. Well, you see, I knew they both owed you money, and I didn't like to disappoint them.

TOM. They don't get any more from me.

RAF. Be merciful, Tom; and Tiptop, the Viscount, I and you, will all go to the Derby together.

TOM. Will you? D—e, we'll have a day of it, I warrant.

KATE. Shall we go into the garden?

FRANK. Yes; I want you to show me the new bed of rhododendrons.

KATE. Clara, will you come?

CLARA. No, thanks; I'm not interested in flowers.

FRANK. You might have known, Kate, that flowers would only weary Miss Bellingham; they are the productions of nature. 'Tis a pity we haven't the last novel of fashionable life, or the latest book on—

CLARA. Society; though your moral lessons are far more entertaining.

FRANK. Raffles, will you—

RAF. No, thanks; not at present. Gardens are so green at this time of year—monotonous color, green.

FRANK. Come, then, Kate. [*Exeunt FRANK and KATE by window*]

TOM. Well, Charley, any sprees since I left?

RAF. Eh?

TOM. D'you recollect painting Tubbs's horse sky blue?

RAF. Eh?

TOM. And how we—

RAF. Don't stay in, Tom, on my account.

BABY. That's a plain enough hint

TOM. Oh, his hints are always plain enough. Let's go.

RAF. (*Warmly*) Miss Bellingham—Clara—let me take this opportunity—(*taking her hand*)

CLARA. There! (*Withdrawing it.*) Don't be foolish! You will ruffle your collar. Sit down. (*He seats himself by her.*) Such warmth is unnatural in you.

RAF. But such a subject demands—

CLARA. Do you still profess an admiration for me, then?

RAF. Can you doubt—

CLARA. Now don't talk in raptures! Leave that for novelists; we are people of the world, you and I.

RAF. Yes, but love—

CLARA. Oh! don't mention it! Love is all very well for common people; poor things! it's like the small-pox or the measles—they can't escape it. For my part, in marriage, it is quite enough to have to go through the fatigue of the ceremony, without the necessity of feeling passion.

RAF. But such beauty as yours must conquer hearts. You will marry—you must.

CLARA. Perhaps; it is a necessary evil.

RAF. This proposed marriage between you and Frank——

CLARA. Don't mention it! I—I—never mind.

RAF. Would you marry him?

CLARA. Marry him!—not I! I do believe in similarity of constitutions to render marriage tolerable; love can be dispensed with, but that, never! There were never two constitutions so totally opposed as his and mine.

RAF. Then may I hope?

CLARA. What for?

RAF. Your hand.

CLARA. It is perfectly indifferent to me whether you do or not.

RAF. If a life of devotion——

CLARA. In raptures again!

RAF. (*Aside*) D——n her coolness. (*Aloud*) Well, I won't hope,—I'll be confident!

CLARA. What do you mean?

RAF. I've made up my mind to marry you.

CLARA. Indeed! I suppose my consent——

RAF. Quite unnecessary! I'll marry you—I'll spend your money—I won't love you—and we'll be d——d happy together.

CLARA. Dear me! what a sublime prospect! The wife of the Honorable Charles Raffler, third son of the late Lord Beggerley! Charming, indeed!

RAF. Yes; you will be perfectly independent, and do just as you please.

CLARA. And in return for this liberty, you will do me the kindness of cashing my cheques. Dear me, it is enticing!

RAF. Then, accept it at once.

CLARA. Oh, no! such visions of happiness require time and thought to comprehend them. And I presume the Honorable Mrs. Raffler will receive as much attention as her husband can spare from his sporting duties?

RAF. Attention! A lady of fashion——

CLARA. The wife of the Honorable Charles Raffler——

RAF. A lady of fashion require any attention from her husband! You are joking.

CLARA. Ha! ha! And yet, I believe husbands, as a rule, do give a little of their company to their wives.

RAF. Only common, vulgar husbands, who love their wives.

CLARA. Well, for the look of the thing—and the necessity of obtaining cheques, it would perhaps be proper to attend now and then on your wife.

RAF. Oh, ay! for the cheques, it would perhaps be polite to attend in person. There, Miss Bellingham, is the prospect!

CLARA. It is enchanting!

RAF. Similar constitutions! Perfect indifference on both sides!

CLARA. Except on the part of the husband—to an occasional cheque.

RAF. Of course. An easy, independent existence. Is it a bargain?

CLARA. What is the purchase-money to be?

RAF. Oh! I can manage to get along on five thousand a-year.

CLARA. You let yourself go too cheap, indeed you do.

RAF. That can easily be remedied.

CLARA. I must thoroughly consider it.

*Enter Tom.*

RAF. Do so, and you are mine.

CLARA. Don't be too confident.

RAF. I kiss this dear hand, fully assured it will one day be mine.

TOM. (*Aside.*) I say, I mustn't see this. I'll take my hook.

[*Going to door, when he hears SIR GEOFFREY'S voice outside, calling "ARNOLD!"*]

(*Aside.*) Hullo! Sir Geoffrey! I don't want to meet him. (*Running behind screen.*) I'll stay here; he'll only pass through to his study.

RAF. Will you venture into the garden with me?

CLARA. I had better go alone, thanks; I should be a dull companion.

RAF. Impossible.

CLARA. You forget, I have your brilliant proposition to think over.

RAF. Ah! true.

*Enter SIR GEOFFREY and ARNOLD.*

SIR G. Oh! Raffer, how are you? You are just the man I wished to meet; I want to have a few words with you. Can you spare me a minute or two?

RAF. Certainly, it's the only thing I can spare.

[*Exit CLARA by window*]

SIR G. A—Arnold—let me see—there was something I wanted to say. Ah! how about the Church?

AR. It's finished, Sir.

SIR G. (*To RAF.*) The Church is tottering, Sir.

RAF. Indeed! and only just finished!

SIR G. (*To ARNOLD.*) Have you looked over it?

AR. Yes.

SIR G. All right?

AR. Yes, quite right.

RAF. I thought it was tottering?

SIR G. So it is. Do you think it will do, Arnold?

AR. Admirably; an excellent piece of work.

RAF. I thought it was tottering?

SIR G. So it is, and I am bolstering it up.

AR. In your brightest style.

SIR G. You see, Arnold says it is written in my brightest style—in my happiest vein—ahem!

RAF. Written?

SIR G. Yes; a letter on the present state of the Church of England.

RAF. Ah! and it's tottering?

SIR G. Yes.

RAF. And your letter will bolster it up?

SIR G. It may.

RAF. It will!

SIR G. Do you think so?

RAF. I'm sure of it!



SIR G. (*Seizing his hand*). You are a friend! You shall read it before it goes to the press.

RAF. Heaven forbid!

SIR G. Why not?

RAF. I prefer to read it in print.

SIR G. Say no more; you shall have a dozen copies.

RAF. On thick paper?

SIR G. On plate paper, if you wish.

RAF. Thanks. With a wide margin: they'll do for jotting down beta.

SIR G. Ha! ha! But I hope it won't bring me in bad odour with the Bishops.

RAF. Why?

SIR G. I've blown them up.

RAF. They won't mind it—from you.

SIR G. I've told them my mind.

RAF. 'Gad! it won't kill them!—they can bear it.

SIR G. I wish I were certain of it. It's a difficult subject. Between you and me, I had only fifteen minutes to read it up.

RAF. What put it into your head?

SIR G. It's the only subject I haven't touched upon this year. I am not so much at home in it as in many other subjects. But I daresay it will have its effect. The Church will be—

RAF. Bolstered!

SIR G. Up!

RAF. Up!

SIR G. (*Seizing his hand*). God bless you! You may go, Arnold. [Exit ARNOLD]

RAF. Is this what you wished to say to me?

SIR G. No. Shall we go to the study?

RAF. This will do; will it not?

SIR G. Very well. Sit down. (*RAFFLER on table; SIR GEOFFREY standing.*)

TOM. (*Peeping out, aside.*) Confound them!

RAF. Won't you sit down?

SIR G. No; I am used to standing. I speak in the House constantly. There is nothing like constant speaking, if you wish to become an orator. I read how Pitt, or Burke, or Fox—one of them—made a vow to speak every night he attended the House. I did the same. He missed once: I've never missed a single night!

RAF. Good gracious! I had some thoughts of running for Parliament myself.

SIR G. Well done!

RAF. But it's all over now. Every night!—good gad!

SIR G. I have therefore learnt to bear the fatigue of standing.

RAF. Gad! they'll never learn to bear the fatigue of listening.

SIR G. Why? Well, never mind; let us return to our subject. You know I've a marriage in view between Frank and Miss Bellingham?

RAF. Ah! (*Aside*) The view's a distant one, I'm thinking!

SIR G. But, somehow, they don't seem to get on so well together as I could wish.

RAF. You have observed that?

SIR G. Yes, and, I am sorry to say, Frank appears to me the one to be blamed. He treats her with indifference, and, sometimes, almost with rudeness.

RAF. And she resents it—very properly.

SIR G. No, she doesn't; but I am sure she feels it, without showing it; for although her education may have taught her to hide her feelings, yet it cannot have entirely subdued them. You must put an end to this.

RAF. Indeed!

SIR G. You are his friend, and, therefore, more likely—

RAF. To steal her from him.

SIR G. No, no; more likely to have influence with him than I. You must speak to him, and ascertain his feelings on the subject. You know what to say.

RAF. Oh, yea, I know what to say.

SIR G. Put it gently to him; he is hot-headed and obstinate. And for this service, you may command my purse to the same extent as your last loan from me.

RAF. Thanks! it will set me on my legs again.

SIR G. Call Frank, he's just outside. I'll be off.

(Exit SIR GEOFFREY. Tom tries to get away; but runs back.

RAF. (Going to window.) Frank! (Hullo! from FRANK.

Enter FRANK, by window.

FRANK. Well, old boy?

RAF. Sit down, and let's have a chat, Frank. Do any racing now?

FRANK. Very little. (Sitting down.) I beat Turncoat with the Beamish Boy over a four-mile course last month,—that's all.

RAF. Any business on the turf?

FRANK. No.

RAF. Well, here's a tip for you. Politician and The Irish Patriot are the two best horses for the Commons Stakes. They've said a good deal about the Patriot being sound, and so on; but I know that he only looks forward to getting a place. Back him.

FRANK. No, no; I've cut the turf altogether.

RAF. Ah! Wish I could; but it's my living. By-the-by, I had no idea Miss Bellingham was coming here so soon.

FRANK. Indeed!

RAF. Nice girl, Frank.

FRANK. Do you think so?

RAF. Don't you? I think she's a good 'un.

FRANK. Do you want my frank opinion of her?

RAF. Yes.

FRANK. Well, then, in my opinion, she's a heartless, cold-blooded coquette. There, you have it.

RAF. Ah, you'll think better of her when you're married.

FRANK. Married?

CLARA appears at the window and stops.

RAF. Yes! your father intends it, does he not?

FRANK. Look here, I'd sooner live and die a bachelor than marry a woman like her! Besides,—never mind.

RAF. Indeed! But your father—

FRANK. Well?

RAF. Won't he cut up rough about it?

FRANK. Let him, and be——

RAF. Very well. But it will be a blow to him.

FRANK. Look here, Raffler, I'd gladly give a cool hundred to any one who'd take her off my hands.

RAF. (*Rising.*) Will you? (*Holding-out his hand.*)

FRANK. What's the matter?

RAF. I say, done.

FRANK. You'll do it?

RAF. Yes.

FRANK. Then, done, with pleasure. I wish you joy of your bargain.

RAF. Thanks.

FRANK. You must marry her privately and quickly, or the bargain's off.

RAF. Very well.

FRANK. You've had my opinion of her, and I repeat it to you—a heartless, cold-blooded coquette—a woman from Nature's worst mould!

(*CLARA retires.*)

RAF. No more! Don't abuse my property; you've sold your interest.

FRANK. Or rather paid you to take it over—like shares in a rotten company.

RAF. All right. (*Aside.*) I think I've done my duty to the old man and earned my money. (*Aloud.*) Have you a weed to offer a gentleman?

FRANK. Plenty, upstairs. Come along, and then we'll go and see the dogs;

(*Exeunt RAFFLER and FRANK by the door.*)

*Enter CLARA by window, as TOM is running off.*

CLARA. (*Seeing him*) Stay!

TOM. Hullo! I've got an appointment, I'll—

CLARA. You've been listening!

TOM. I couldn't help it; I ran there to escape Sir Geoffrey. Well, good-bye, I'm—

CLARA. Stay! I wish to speak to you.

TOM. Well.

CLARA. They were talking of me?

TOM. Who?

CLARA. Mr Chillingwood and Mr. Raffler.

TOM. Oh, just a few little empty compliments.

CLARA. Tell me what he called me.

TOM. A nice girl, and a good 'un.

CLARA. Liar!

TOM. No, he didn't say that.

CLARA. You lie!

TOM. D——e, you're going to compliment me now. I tell you, Charley Raffler said—

CLARA. Raffler! I don't care what he said.

TOM. But you asked me.

CLARA. What did the other say? You understand me well enough.

TOM. Oh! Frank Chillingwood! Well, I own,—I don't care to repeat——

CLARA. I want to know. I shall not bear you ill-will for telling me.

TOM. Very well, if you will have it. He said you were "a heartless, cold-blooded coquette."

CLARA. Well?

TOM. And "a woman from Nature's worst mould."

CLARA. Anything more?

TOM. Nothing.

CLARA. Where have they gone.

TOM. To see the dogs.

CLARA. Thank you! You may go.

TOM. I wish I hadn't heard anything!

[Exit TOM.]

CLARA *sits herself in a contemplative attitude.* Enter KATE *from garden.*

KATE. Clara! all alone?

CLARA. Yes.

KATE. (*Seating herself by CLARA.*) Where is Mr. Raffler?

CLARA. Gone to the dogs.

KATE. Where?

CLARA. To see the dogs.

KATE. And I've been with Miss Chillingwood, learning a little gardening. Have you seen her?

CLARA. No.

KATE. It's a sight. A large straw hat on her head, her clothes tucked up all round, a pair of brown cotton gloves on, and a trowel in her hand, with which she wages war against every little weed in the garden. You should see her!

CLARA. Yees.

KATE. And Sir Hector has just come in a pair of sky-blue trousers, and Miss Chillingwood was so engaged on her work that she quite inadvertently sent a trowel-full of dirt flying at him.

CLARA. Ah!

KATE. You won't mind my saying so, Clara, I'm sure, but Mr. Raffler seems very attentive to you.

CLARA. Indeed.

KATE. Do you know, Clara, I think it is such fun to watch the first signs of a courtship.

CLARA. Ah.

KATE. How earnest the gentleman becomes! So ready to oblige the lady—to fetch and carry and come like a little dog.

CLARA. Yes.

KATE. I think I should like to be a match-maker above all things. There is Mrs. Brown, for instance, who has four grown-up daughters, all ready to be married, and mamma trots them out before every bachelor in the place. The eldest was courted by the curate, but when Mr. Figgs, who has made a large fortune by sugar, began to pay her a little attention, the curate was dismissed, and Mr. Figgs took his place. It is now,—Miss Brown, attached to Mr. Figgs, vice Mr. Jones, the curate, discharged. And then—are you listening, Clara?

CLARA. Listening? No, Kate.

KATE. Why, what's the matter? You don't look yourself, Clara; there's a cloud over your face.

CLARA. (*Rising.*) I've been insulted.

KATE In this house? Oh, no.

CLARA. Oh, yes, it's true. He has spoken words of me——

KATE. Why, I thought he was in love with you.

CLARA. In love! Who do you mean?

KATE. Mr. Raffler.

CLARA. Mr. Raffler is a gentleman; I have been insulted by a—

KATE. Not by Frank!

CLARA. Yes.

KATE. What has he done—what has he said?

CLARA. You know, Kate, why I was invited here.

KATE. I know Sir Geoffrey wished to make a match between you and Frank.

CLARA. My father was Sir Geoffrey's oldest friend, and, while I was yet very young, they determined to cement their friendship by a marriage between Mr. Frank Chillingwood and myself when we were grown up. My father died when I was fourteen, but he had hinted to me his desire that I should marry the son of his friend—if I liked him.

KATE (*Aside*). That marriage is impossible.

CLARA. I went to my uncle's in London, and we seldom met after my father's death. He was at college and on the Continent, and I continued in London. Sir Geoffrey invited me here, and frankly told me his object, and I promised to fulfil my father's wish—if I liked him. This is the first time we have been really brought together for many years, and he has insulted me! I hate him! I hate him!

KATE. Oh, Clara, how unlike you!

CLARA. Ay, you judge me from my normal state. Blame those who had the care of my education—not me! I have been brought up to ridicule passion, to sneer at friendship, to disbelieve in love, and to bear a cold heart within my bosom—this is the teaching of my world. But to be scorned and insulted by a man! No, I cannot then conceal what I feel! And I am scorned and insulted by a man whom I hate!

KATE. Compose yourself, Clara.

CLARA. I have not done with him. I will have true revenge.

KATE. Forget him, Clara.

CLARA. Never! He has scorned me—I will make him love me! I will bring him upon his knees before me, beseeching a look, a smile; and when I have poisoned his peace of mind, and his passion is at its highest, I will cast his love in his teeth, and teach him what it is to be scorned! This is my revenge!

KATE. Oh, Clara, you cannot do this!

CLARA. You doubt it! I have not lived without learning something of human nature. Man's weak point is vanity—his is vanity. I will reverse the course of love—the woman shall make love to the man!

KATE. You make love to him?

CLARA. Yes, and you shall see the effect. I will do this, if I have to lower my pride to the dust, and he shall learn to what lengths hate will drive an insulted woman.

END OF ACT II.



## ACT III.

(A WEEK HAS ELAPSED.)

SCENE: *Garden; seats, &c. CLARA and KATE discovered seated.*

CLARA. Well, Kate, what do you think of the position of affairs now?

KATE. Indeed, I don't care to think, Clara.

CLARA. Is he not changed towards me?

KATE. Yes, indeed.

CLARA. Are not his manners completely altered?

KATE. Yes, indeed!

CLARA. Why, Kate, what a sigh!

KATE. Yes, I'm low-spirited.

CLARA. A sigh is either a sign of love or—indigestion; the symptoms of both are very similar. Are you in love, Kate?

KATE. Yes.

CLARA. That accounts for your low spirits. Love is a sort of moral bankruptcy. You go through Cupid's Court and come out whitewashed—ready to go through it again. The first time you feel rather ashamed of yourself and try to hide it from others; but after a succession of bankruptcies—I mean loves—you don't mind openly avowing it, although, if you are very deeply involved, you are obliged to appear at the higher court of Hymen. Is he unkind to his darling?

KATE. Worse than that—he is beginning to be untrue. Unkindness I could endure; but faithlessness is very hard to bear.

CLARA. My dear, you treat these things too seriously. Tear him from your heart.

KATE. I cannot do that!

CLARA. You are such a silly, simple girl, and have such silly, simple ideas, that I'm afraid I should be only wasting my time if I endeavoured to convince you of the absurdity of love. Bah!

KATE. Have you never loved?

CLARA. Never, Kate; my heart is of adamant, and Love's arrows cannot penetrate. It is a passion fit only for boys and girls—and poets.

KATE. Don't blame me for being of a less stern nature.

CLARA. Blame you? Oh, no! Now, let me try to raise your spirits by telling you how my scheme proceeds. You shall be my confidante, Kate, and shall hear everything without being required to give an opinion—for I don't think it would be of much value.

KATE. No; I'm afraid not.

CLARA. Well, listen. You were, doubtless, surprised at my little adventure the other day. That a skilful horsewoman like myself should allow her horse to run away was surprising, was it not?

KATE. Yes; but the horse——

CLARA. The horse! It was impossible to have had a quieter animal. It was a manœuvre, Kate.

KATE. A manœuvre?

CLARA. Yes. We were riding gently along, Mr. Chillingwood just a little in the rear, when my horse suddenly bolted away. I screamed, actually screamed,—a thing I thought it was impossible for me to do,—and cried for help. Now, I know that Mr. Chillingwood, whatever else he may be, is a man of courage, and would be certain to come to my rescue. I was right; after a quarter of a mile's gallop he overtook me, seized the reins, and stopped the horse. I never fainted in my life, my dear, but I made a pretence of it on this occasion, to put him under the necessity of lifting me off. I lay in his arms for two minutes, while he was attempting all sorts of methods to bring me to, and then I sat up. Now, I gained two ends by this brilliant manœuvre,—can you guess what they were?

KATE. No; I can't.

CLARA. Of course, not. Well, end number one: by saving me from a danger, as he thought, a feeling of interest for me was raised in him for the first time. This is no false theory, my dear. When a man saves another's life in battle, he has a tender regard for that man ever after; and, if such a feeling arises in the case of a man, how much greater must it be in the case of a woman! Do you understand me, Kate?

KATE. Yes! I think so.

CLARA. So much, then, for end number one; now for end number two. I admit this Mr. Chillingwood is a man, and therefore, before this affair, I was at a loss how to commence my attack without disgusting him with the picture of unwomanly advances.

KATE. You were right there; that would have ruined your scheme.

CLARA. How do you know—have you studied him also? Well, you see now I have a right to feel gratitude towards him as my rescuer, and I very much mistake if I have not already won his heart by cautiously developing that feeling into a pretended passion for him. Do you see, my dear?

KATE. Yes; but Clara——

CLARA. Well.

KATE. Why not give up this scheme,—it cannot make you happy, and can only make him miserable.

CLARA. You take a strong interest in him, Kate.

KATE. How can I help it when it is your intention to play such a part towards him. Oh, Clara, do not do it. Revenge and hate are poor qualities in a woman.

CLARA. They would be in such a simple nature as yours, my dear, but mine is of sterner stuff.

KATE. And less womanly.

CLARA. Perhaps so; but I am determined to persevere to the end. Besides, it would show a poor courage to give over the pursuit when the game is half won.

KATE. It would show a good heart!

CLARA. Pooh! I'll bring it to a climax this very day, if you press me farther with your silly nonsense! Do you dare me, Kate?

KATE. No, indeed; but I cannot believe you could succeed so far as to make him tell you he loved you.

CLARA. You do dare me, in fact. Well, Kate, if I bring you, this day, a letter in his handwriting, expressing his ardent passion for me, will you acknowledge that I have succeeded?

KATE. Clara, Clara!

CLARA. Will you?

KATE. I will, for the sooner it is over the better.

CLARA. And on my part, then, I promise if I do not succeed in this, Kate, to give in to your wishes and forego my revenge. Will that satisfy you?

KATE. Yes, I am satisfied, for I cannot believe you will succeed.

CLARA. We shall see. Here comes the gentleman himself. Hush!

FRANK enters and passes, not observing them. CLARA walks after him, and taps him on the shoulder.

FRANK. (*Turning.*) Miss Bellingham!

CLARA. Are you surprised to see me?

FRANK. Not surprised—delighted!

CLARA. Dear me! Compliments from one who hates such empty conventionalities.

FRANK. Not when they come from the heart.

CLARA. The inference is plain, and I ought to appreciate it. You were engaged in a pleasant reverie, I hope, when I disturbed you?

FRANK. Far from pleasant, I assure you, to my peace of mind.

CLARA. Who was the subject of it?

FRANK. I dare not tell you. Can't you guess?

CLARA. Shall I?

FRANK. Yes.

CLARA. I will—another time.

FRANK. I have something to tell you.

CLARA. A secret?

FRANK. Yes.

CLARA. You should hide no secrets from the woman you have preserved.

FRANK. Then, may I tell it you?

CLARA. Yes—another time. See, here is Kate, (*he starts*) who wishes to have your opinion on the new arrangement of the flower-beds. I am going indoors.

FRANK. May I not—

CLARA. She is very anxious to have your opinion,—are you not, Kate? You are a man of taste in such matters,—few men are. (*FRANK is silent, and turns away. Exit CLARA, purposely dropping her handkerchief.*)

KATE. (*Timidly.*) Frank, dear, will you come and see the beds with me?

FRANK. If you wish it, Kate, but I am sure I cannot advise you on a matter of taste.

KATE. But I should be so pleased, Frank.



FRANK. Would you, Kate? Well, then, you shall be—Why Miss Bellingham has dropped her handkerchief. Stay here; I will run and return it, and be back directly.

*(Exit FRANK with handkerchief.)*

KATE *(Sobbing)*. Oh, Frank! Frank! You will break my heart! You used to love me, Frank, and I was very proud of your love; but now you are forsaking me for one who is trifling with you. Has she no compassion? Oh, she does not know my story, and I dare not tell it. Oh, Frank! Frank! I am your wife in the sight of God, and I love you dearly—dearly! Do not break my heart—your true, loving wife's heart! Oh, God in heaven, give me back his love! Let not this woman steal his heart from me! Bring him back to me—he needs no forgiveness. I do not blame him—I only want his love. If I lose that, let me die, for that is all I live for! Frank! Frank! *[Exit, slowly Enter BABY, with skipping-rope. She cries, "Come along!" and enter TOM, carrying a cabbage.]*

TOM. Here, I can't carry this beastly cabbage all day!

BABY. Don't say "beastly cabbage!" It's the only thing, Tom, that's come up in my garden—

TOM. Except the weeds.

BABY. And I'm proud of it. Put it down carefully.

TOM. Ugh! here's a caterpillar! I suppose you're proud of that, too. Don't ask me to eat that cabbage *(putting it down on seat)*. D—e, I hope no one will sit upon it!

BABY. Well, now, it's threepence you've won from me.

TOM. Fourpence!

BABY. Threepence!

TOM. Fourpence. Now, look here, I won a penny, didn't I?

BABY. Well.

TOM. Then I won another—that's twopence, isn't it?

BABY. Well.

TOM. Then I said, "Shall we go double or quits?" and you said, "All right."

BABY. No, I didn't.

TOM. Yes, you did; and I won—that's fourpence.

BABY. Threepence.

TOM. Oh, all right, then; let it be threepence.

BABY. No, I shan't! I wish you wouldn't speak so disrespectfully to me.

TOM. Bother! You're cross, because you've lost fourpence.

BABY. Threepence! I cross? I was never in a better humour in my life.

TOM. D—e, you must be a pleasant companion, then.

BABY. Don't swear; it's rude to swear before a lady. You've won two shillings of me since you came.

TOM. Well, if I have?

BABY. I don't like it; I want to win sometimes.

TOM. Yes, you'd like to win always.

BABY. Of course I should; but you're so unpleasant.

TOM. Unpleasant! Why should I be unpleasant, when I've won fourpence.

BABY. Threepence! I won't play with you any more!



TOM. Don't, then!

BABY. You don't play fairly at all!

TOM. That's because I win, I suppose.

BABY. I believe you cheat, I do.

TOM. Go on; what else?

BABY. You're a nasty fellow!

TOM. Go on.

BABY. You're a beast, that's what you are! and I'll write to Dick and ask him to come and see me, that's what I'll do! And I'll marry Dick, I will, and I won't marry you!

TOM. Well, you can't have both.

BABY. I will, if I like; I'll do just as I please.

TOM. Now, my little filly, don't let the waterworks play. I had bought a present—

BABY. (*Looking up, anxiously.*) For me?

TOM. A beautiful tortoiseshell purse.

BABY. For me?

TOM. With blue silk lining.

BABY. For me?

TOM. And a monogram, engraved in enamel on gold.

BABY. What is it?

TOM. N. O.—Nelly Chillingwood.

BABY. Oh, Tom, it is for me, then. How kind of you; have you got it with you?

TOM. Yes; in my pocket.

BABY. Will you give it me?

TOM. If you'll give me a kiss, Baby, and make it up.

BABY. Oh, Tom, I don't mind what you said, really;—and, as for a kiss, I'll give you twenty if you like.

TOM. (*Producing purse.*) Well, here it is; and I'll take three kisses on account.

BABY. You'd better take them all, Tom, and open another account.

TOM. There, then. (*Kissing her, and giving her the purse.*) I think you have about fifty kisses of mine.

BABY. Oh, but I gave them to you back, Tom.

TOM. Not all; I'll draw them as I want them.

BABY. All right. Now, Tom, let's —Hullo! Sir Hector and his man.

*Enter SIR HECTOR and BOWLINE.*

SIR H. Ah! how d'you do? Well, Baby, my girl, you'll give an old man a kiss.

BABY. (*Kissing him.*) Old man! I'm sure Aunt doesn't think you an old man.

SIR H. I hope not. I meant old in comparison with yourself. By-the-by, that reminds me of a story about a little Spanish nymph, who—ahem—

TOM. Well!

SIR H. When Baby's not present, Tom, I'll tell you. I want to speak to you.

BABY. Well, Bowline, how are you?

BOW. Hearty, Miss, thank'ee. What o'clock shall I bring the vessel round, your honour?

SIR H. I shall stay dinner,—say at ten.

BOW. Very well, your honour. There's some'at wrong with the ropes, your honour, she doesn't answer her helm well.

SIR H. Get another set of harness.

BOW. The larboard animal be rayther ricketty on one of her props, your honour.

SIR H. Then bring Polly, instead.

BOW. Ay, ay, your honour. (*Tugging his forelock. Exit.*)

TOM. A strange specimen of the genus coachman.

SIR H. Yes; truly. An old man-o'-war's-man, who saved my life at sea. He is coachman, butler, valet—everything. As a coachman he has driven me into seven ditches, upset me fourteen times, and lamed half-a-dozen animals. As a butler, he drinks the best part of my wines; and, as a valet, he never shaves me without leaving his mark behind. But he's invaluable.

TOM. I should think he was, at that rate.

SIR H. A carriage is a ship to him.

TOM. A pity it isn't really so—to save expense.

SIR H. Well, now to business.

BABY. Oh, if you're going to talk business, I shall go in, although I don't know what business Tom can have—(*aside*) except to court me. I shall be in the library, Tom.

TOM. All right, Baby. Ta! ta! You can pay me that fourpence when I come in.

BABY. Threepence, Tom.

TOM. All right, then. Ta! ta! (*Exit BABY.*) Well, now?

SIR H. My boy, I love.

TOM. That's common enough.

(*Seating himself.*)

SIR H. I love an angel.

TOM. Ah! that's uncommon. I'm afraid I can't assist you. You had better get her to provide you with a pair of wings and be off.

SIR H. I was merely figurative. She is a woman.

TOM. Then she can't be an angel.

SIR H. She is the divinest of her sex.

TOM. That doesn't say much for her—they all are before marriage, but afterwards the tune changes. The one is a swelling anthem in E major, the other a decided fugue in E minor.

SIR H. She has a pleasing person.

TOM. Now we drop the figurative, and descend to common-sense.

SIR H. She has ten thousand pounds.

TOM. Now we come to the figurative again.

SIR H. I dote upon her.

TOM. But she doesn't upon you,—that's very often the case.

SIR H. I love her.

TOM. Gad! she ought to be proud; but now, does she return your passion?

SIR H. I don't know.

TOM. Perhaps it would be as well to ask her.

SIR H. I dare not.

TOM. Why? Is she so unapproachable?

SIR H. No; but in her company the words refuse to come to

my lips. I am naturally timid when alone with a woman, and so cannot summon up courage to say what I wish; and in company, it is impossible to do so.

TOM. I always thought timidity was like the bloom of youth—wore off with age.

SIR H. How old do you think me?

TOM. Frankly?

SIR H. Yes.

TOM. The wrong side of sixty.

SIR H. Scandalous! Fifty, not a day more.

TOM. Well,—you're the oldest fifty I ever saw in my life.

SIR H. A positive fact, I assure you.

TOM. And the lady?

SIR H. A mere girl.

TOM. Her name?

SIR H. Miss Chillingwood.

TOM. What, Baby?

SIR H. No; Betsy.

TOM. D——e, the oldest girl I ever saw in my life. But why am I entrusted with your secret?

SIR H. Because you shall woo her, Sir.

TOM. Oh, thank you.

SIR H. For me.

TOM. Ah! that's a different matter.

SIR H. I have attempted to explain myself, but in vain. I have sent her poems—anonously.

TOM. I didn't know you were a poet.

SIR H. Oh, I sacrifice to the Muses now and then.

TOM. Don't do it often, or the Muses might sacrifice you.

SIR H. I sent her one two days ago. I addressed her as Chloe!

TOM. (*Aside.*) Old Chloe, I believe.

SIR H. And subscribed myself Damon.

Said Damon to Chloe, one fine summer's day,  
As he pillowed his head on her breast,—

TOM. But you've never pillowed your head there!

SIR H. Metaphorical,—poet's licence, you know.

TOM. Yes, there's a devil of a licence about it!

SIR H. Listen—

Oh! merciless Fate! why dost call me away!  
When I long to remain here at rest!

TOM. Perhaps she sent Fate; didn't like your remaining there.

SIR H. Poetical expression; "Oh! merciless Fate! why dost call me away!"

TOM. That's rather a hard name for the Admiralty, isn't it? Well, heave ahead, Damon.

SIR H. She visits these rural shades.

TOM. You mean takes a constitutional here?

SIR H. Yes, about this hour of the day.

TOM. Well?

SIR H. I will seek a secluded spot among these trees, and you shall make a proposal on my behalf.

TOM. Very well. (*Aside*) And I'll turn it to account afterwards, for Baby's sake.

SIR H. If she receives it kindly, you can make a signal to me, and I will appear. Cough loud, twice,—then, leave us to our love.

TOM. Oh, I'll leave you to your love, then. But in return, you must grant me a favour.

SIR H. What is it?

TOM. I'll tell you afterwards.

SIR H. Very well. You'll do your best for me.

TOM. You may take your oath to that. I'll give Old Chloe the straight tip.

SIR H. If she should be angry—

TOM. I'll soften her down.

SIR H. I long to press her to my heart.

TOM. See that your waistcoat buttons are firm, then.

SIR H. I look all right, eh? You see nothing bad in these clothes?

TOM. No; only the figure.

SIR H. I have wooed her silently for ten years.

TOM. You shall make up for it in the next ten.

SIR H. I have lived upon love all that time.

TOM. It doesn't seem to have disagreed with you.

SIR H. I remember well the first time I met her; she appeared like a goddess to me. I said to myself, "Here is my Fate!"

TOM. Yes, by Gad, here comes your Fate in a straw bonnet, and a red parasol. Hide yourself, Damon, old boy.

SIR H. Let me have a glimpse of her (*Peeping*).

TOM. She's reading. Get along!

SIR H. You'll do your best?

TOM. To be sure. Be off!

SIR H. You'll cough—

TOM. My lungs out. That's right.

(SIR HECTOR takes up a position behind the tree, while TOM seats himself.)

Gad! I hardly like to tackle the old woman, after all. I've been pretending a little passion for Old Chloe myself, which she hasn't taken unkindly. I'll put a little poetry in my looks, for she's romantically inclined; a good sigh, as she passes.

*Enter MISS CHILLINGWOOD, reading.*

TOM. (*Sighing.*) Heigho!

MISS C. (*Looking up.*) What a sigh, sir!

TOM. (*Gaping.*) Ah, madam!

MISS C. (*Walking to him.*) What is it, sir?

TOM. (*Tapping his forehead.*) I've got something here, madam.

MISS C. Have you, indeed?

TOM. A weighty secret on my mind.

MISS C. Dare you confide?

TOM. To you, ma'am? No; yet—

MISS C. (*Sitting down by his side.*) You can trust me; I am not a giddy, babbling girl.

TOM. Ay, ma'am, you may well say that.

MISS C. I assure you, sir, your confidence will not be abused, if you trust me with your secret.

TOM. To be sure, ma'am. Why, if we can't trust a secret with safety to one of your years—



MISS C. To one of my what, sir?

TOM. To—to one—I say—to one of your prudence and discretion.

MISS C. Oh, sir, you flatter me.

TOM. No, no; I couldn't—(*aside*) with honesty.

MISS C. I shall not disclose your secret, sir.

TOM. Are you sure, ma'am? A woman with a secret is like a man with the gout; there's no peace, until it's got rid of. Though I cannot doubt you, ma'am.

MISS C. But I am a woman, sir.

TOM. To be sure; there can be no doubt about that, I hope. But, then, you are a marvel of discretion among your sex.

MISS C. But the secret, sir.

TOM. Oh, ay; the secret. Please prepare yourself, for I must speak bluntly.

MISS C. Is it something very dreadful?

TOM. No, ma'am, your sex generally receive the same news with tolerable complacency; and the older the recipient the more satisfactory it is to her.

MISS C. Pray go on, sir.

TOM. Very well, to the point at once. I know, ma'am, one who loves you.

MISS C. Indeed! (*Aside*) He means himself. poor man.

TOM. You may well be surprised, faith! I can hardly—

MISS C. Well, sir, proceed.

TOM. This man, ma'am, loves you devotedly. He has sacrificed to the Muses in your name. Poor Damon!

MISS C. (*Aside*) Damon! I did not guess that it came from him.

TOM.—

Said Damon to Chloe, one fine summer's day.

As he pillowed his head on her breast,—

Ah! beautiful.

MISS C. (*Smiling*) Self-praise, sir.

TOM. Self-praise! What the devil—

MISS C. Well, I admit they are pretty. I did not know you were a poet.

TOM. I a poet! The deuce—

MISS C. Do not blush, sir, but proceed with your story.

TOM. Chloe, Damon loves you consumedly. (*Aside*) I may as well lay it on pretty strong for him. (*Aloud*) He worships the sight of you, glows in your presence, pines in your absence, and, ma'am, I have seen him kissing the ground on which you have trodden. This is commendable enough even when done by an ordinary lover, but performed by a man of stout dimensions it is heroic!

MISS C. But why this roundabout confession?

TOM. Ah! I offend you.

MISS C. No! it is sufficiently interesting.

TOM. I perceive your indifference.

MISS C. Do you?

TOM. I will say no more.

MISS C. Oh, I should like to hear the rest.

TOM. (*Aside*) I thought it was only feigned. I'll try her further (*Aloud*.) Ah, ma'am, you are cruel to a tender lover.

MISS C. But, sir—

TOM. Adieu! heartless one. (*Rising*.)

MISS C. Don't go, dear Mr. Tufthunt, I desire you to proceed.

TOM. Can you love poor Damon in return?

MISS C. If his affection is as true as you say—

TOM. It is, ma'am; he can't exist without you.

MISS C. Then I will love him devotedly!

TOM. (*Aside*) Or any one else. (*Aloud*) He is near you, ma'am,—poor old Damon is not far off. Will you give him a proof of your affection?

MISS C. He might be offended.

TOM. On the contrary, he desires nothing better.

MISS C. You are sure we shall not be observed?

TOM. Positive. Come, madam. (*Coughing*) Hem! hem!

MISS C. Then receive the proof, sir. (*Rising and throwing her arms round his neck.* SIR HECTOR *appears, aghast.*)

TOM. (*Struggling.*) Miss Chillingwood—Miss Chillingwood—for Heaven's sake—

MISS C. Oh! I will never leave you. Bliss! Ecstasy!

TOM. D—the bliss. We are not alone.

(MISS CHILLINGWOOD *looks up, perceives* SIR HECTOR, *and runs off.*)

Thank goodness! that's a weight off my—body.

SIR H. Death and fury, sir, what does this mean?

TOM. Ha! ha! how yellow you look. Deuce take it, Sir Hector, I didn't bargain for this.

SIR H. Death and fury, sir, will you explain?

TOM. Explain what?

SIR H. I will not trouble you for an explanation, sir, your conduct is self-evident. Why had you not the manliness to own that you loved her?

TOM. Good gracious! Sir Hector, I love her?

SIR H. Why had you not the courage to tell me you were courting her yourself—

TOM. I courting her?

SIR H. But you must needs make me a witness to your perfidy!

TOM. Let me explain, Sir Hector.

SIR H. To the devil with your explanations, you confounded rascal! I'll have satisfaction for this insult, if I swing for it!

TOM. You may swing as much as you like, but I'm d——d if this isn't a blackguardly return for my exertions on your behalf.

SIR H. Your exertions! With her hanging on your neck!

TOM. Well, that was an exertion—to bear her.

SIR H. You audacious scoundrel! I'll put a bullet in your body!

TOM. You're very kind,—but I'd rather you didn't.

SIR H. You shall hear from me, sir.

TOM. Oh, don't put yourself out to write an apology.

SIR H. I'll run you through the ribs!

TOM. And put a bullet in my body,—these are friendly services that I don't require. Gad! I don't want any of your attentions.

SIR H. You shall hear from me to-morrow.

TOM. Say next year.

SIR H. You double-faced villain!

[*Exit* SIR HECTOR.]

TOM. Well, there's a d——d cross-grained fellow! After my

kindness and friendship to him, to want to——Pooh! if I thought he really meant it I would send for the police, and feed him on bread and water for the next three months—instead of love. This comes of trying to help a friend. I'm d——d if I'll ever help any friend again! Gad! the old girl clung to me like a bull-dog, and squeezed all the breath from my body. I suppose she thought I was speaking for myself—confound her! Hulloo!

*Enter BABY.*

BABY. Tom, I've been waiting for you so long, while you've been at this silly business.

TOM. Yes, silly business with a vengeance!

BABY. I'm quite vexed, Tom.

TOM. You're going to lose me, Baby.

BABY. Lose you?

TOM. I'm going to have a bullet in my body.

BABY. What?

TOM. And a sword thrust through my ribs.

BABY. Why?

TOM. Because Sir Hector saw your Aunt with her arms round my neck.

BABY. Round your neck! What were you doing?

TOM. I had been making love to her——

BABY. Making love to her! Well, you deserve to be run through the body, you false, cruel, perjured, wicked, miserable sinner! (*Going away.*)

TOM. But stay! You haven't heard——

BABY. I've heard enough! I'll never speak to you again. (*Runs off.*)

TOM. Well, there now! 'Pon my word, I feel it would afford me a perfect piece of happiness to wring old Damon's nose! D——n it, if I don't go and find him out and do it. On second thoughts, no! It would probably only make him more determined to pursue his diabolical scheme of——of running me through the body. Ha! Miss Bellingham and Frank; I shall be in the way. [*Exit.*]

*Enter CLARA and FRANK.*

CLARA. You must really leave me, or everyone will notice us.

FRANK. (*Warmly.*) I will not leave you until I have said all I wish.

CLARA. Spare me now! Let it be another time.

FRANK. There can be no better time than the present. Oh, Clara! why not have compassion on me? I'm on fire, and I shall be desperate if you will not hear me.

CLARA. I will hear everything you wish to say if you wait until I see a favourable opportunity.

FRANK. Nay, Clara, we are alone, and I——

CLARA. Not now, or I will never hear you at all.

FRANK. You are cruel.

CLARA. No, no, don't think that.

FRANK. Why deny me now?

CLARA. If you cannot wait, write me what you wish to say; I will not hear it now from your lips.

FRANK. At once?



CLARA. If you like.

FRANK. Will you remain here?

CLARA. Yes, but you must send it me, not bring it; I will give you an answer to-morrow.

FRANK. Why not to-night?

CLARA. I have my reasons; to-morrow.

FRANK. To-morrow!

CLARA. (*Sitting down*) Ah me! it will be a dearly bought victory. [*Exit.*]  
And why not? Success cannot be purchased for nothing! He is a brave fellow,—worth twenty of the worldly milksops one meets. He makes love from his heart,—honest daring love; theirs is a sneaking, cowardly sort of regard! His thoughts are fixed only on the woman; theirs only on her fortune. His love is unalterably fixed; they make a bid of theirs. His is love indeed!

*Enter KATE and RAFFLER.*

RAF. Ah! here is Miss Bellingham. We have been searching for you everywhere.

CLARA. Then you have taken a great deal of unnecessary trouble.

RAF. A proof of our esteem.

CLARA. When I require your esteem, you shall hear from me.

RAF. Thank you! shall I fetch pen and ink?

CLARA. I am not so much in want of it, as that would imply.

RAF. Are you not? I feel in a charitable humour,—I long to give everybody something.

CLARA. Begin with your creditors.

RAF. I have already given them something.

CLARA. What?

RAF. The slip. By-the-by, I've had news of them.

KATE. Are they as well as can be expected, after your treatment?

RAF. Oh! they escaped unharmed. They are very desirous of hearing of me,—they take a great interest in my affairs.

KATE. You should place that to your credit.

RAF. So I do, but it still leaves a large balance on the debtor side. Writs are flying all over the country after me.

KATE. Quite like a paper chase.

RAF. Yes—except that I'm the game.

KATE. Perhaps you are used to writs?

RAF. Writs? Oh! dear, yes. I have a book in town with 428 writs pasted inside, which I always place in the most prominent position in my rooms. If a man comes to borrow money, this book at once warns him of the futility of applying to me; if a man comes to dun me for money, he loses heart at the sight of this gallant array, and retires in confusion.

KATE. What is meant by the term "dun"?

RAF. Well, a dun is an objectionable person, who refuses to listen to reason.

KATE. And a "debt"?

RAF. A term unknown in our new dictionary.

KATE. What is the definition of a "man of honour" under the new code?

RAF. A man of honour is one who calls himself so, and is ready

to shoot any person who doubts his word. He may swear, cheat, and love his neighbour's wife, but he must never allow his "honour" to be called in question without defending it.

CLARA. There, that will do. Have you seen Sir Geoffrey, Mr. Raffer? He was inquiring for you.

RAF. (*Aside*) A gentle hint. (*Aloud*) I'll go to him [Exit.

CLARA. Kate, the game is nearly played, and, as I promised, you shall witness the finale. I am every moment expecting the letter from Frank—from Mr. Chillingwood. See, as I speak it comes.

*Enter SERVANT.*

SERV. A letter, Miss. (*Presenting letter*).

CLARA. From Mr. Chillingwood?

SERV. Yes, Miss.

[Exit.

CLARA. Open it, Kate, and read it out.

KATE. Oh, no.

CLARA. But I desire you to do so.

KATE. I would rather not.

CLARA. Now do as I wish, my dear, or how can you know the result?

KATE. As you will, then. (*Opening letter, reading*) "My darling Clara, you have given me permission to open my heart to you, and I shall not spare you. [—I love"—

CLARA. Go on, dear.

KATE. "I—I love you with the deepest love; oh! tell me, have I yours? With it I shall be a king upon earth; without it I—I"—

CLARA. Why you are crying, Kate?

KATE. I cannot read it, and I will not!

CLARA. Give it me, then. (*Reading*) "With it, I shall be a king upon earth; without it, I cannot live. Be mine, Clara, mine for ever, and I will offer you the deepest love that ever man gave to woman. Time shall not diminish it, nor shall its strength ever be reckoned! To-morrow will bring happiness or despair, oh! say, shall it give me peace? Till then, my darling,—etcetera, etcetera." (*Kissing it.*) What shall my answer be, Kate?

KATE. You will refuse his love, if you are a true woman.

CLARA. Why should I refuse it?

KATE. You do not love him!

CLARA. Pardon me, Kate. In that pretty little scheme I announced to you, I forgot to allow for woman's weakness. I made one little mistake in my calculation. My intention was simply to win his love; I have accomplished that, but—hear me, Kate—he has won mine, too!

(*She turns away; KATE presses her hand to her heart.*)

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

A DAY HAS ELAPSED.

SCENE—*Boudoir, after dinner. KATE and CLARA discovered seated.*

KATE. How silent you were during dinner, Clara!

CLARA. Yes, neither the laboured witticisms of Mr. Raffler, nor the pompous remarks of Sir Geoffrey could raise my spirits.

KATE. Why do your spirits require to be raised?

CLARA. I feel in a despondent humour. Success is too often gained at the expense of our feelings; in gaining my end, I have lost my happiness.

KATE. If you had listened to me—

CLARA. I should still be in ignorance of the nature of love, and love is worth any sacrifice. Oh, Kate, when I have railed at love, I have had but a faint idea of its power; when I laughed at it in others, I never dreamt that I should ever be subject to its influence. Kate, true love has two sides; it is at once a torment and a pleasure.

KATE. That is too true; the same love may render one person happy, and another miserable.

CLARA. Yes, but love is very selfish, and the one whom it makes happy gives little thought to the feelings of the other.

KATE. But you, Clara, can feel for the unfortunate in love? I—I know a case which I think would gain your sympathy. May I describe it to you?

CLARA. If you like, only don't be too sure of my sympathy. Go on, I will try to give you my attention.

KATE. It is the case of a young girl, who has been privately married to a young man, of whom she is excessively fond. The secret is rigorously kept from all. Presently—a few months after the marriage—another girl, young, rich, and beautiful, comes to reside in the house—

CLARA. (*Smiling.*) And falls in love with the husband.

KATE. Not only falls in love with him, but succeeds in winning his heart.

CLARA. A very pretty situation. Well?

KATE. They are quite common people, Clara, and live far, far away from here.

CLARA. Common people! And yet the intruder is young, rich, and beautiful!

KATE. No, not exactly common people, but they are not people of any—any social standing; not people whom you would be likely to meet.

CLARA. That doesn't alter the point of the story. Go on.

KATE. You may imagine the feelings of the wife when she



discovers that her husband's love has gone from her to another. Oh! it is a bitter discovery, Clara.

CLARA. Not pleasant, I'll admit.

KATE. It is torture; it is excruciating agony; perhaps death!

CLARA. Agony of mind never kills, Kate.

KATE. What can she do? Day and night her only thought is how to regain her husband's love. And yet, all this time, she sees her rival gradually destroying her peace! What would you do, Clara, in such a case?

CLARA. What would I do! I can't tell you,—I couldn't put myself in her position.

KATE. If she humbled herself before her rival, trusted her with her secret, begged her on her knees not to destroy her happiness, implored her not to rob her of her husband's love,—what would be her answer, do you think?

CLARA. Now, you put a case that is clearer to me. I can at least tell you what my answer would be, if I were the rival. I would not give up the man who possessed my heart—for all the wives in the world, let them beg and implore as they might! No! no, Kate; true love is merciless—merciless! Anything further?

KATE. No—no, I have told you all,—there is nothing more—I have done.

CLARA. How did it end,—this case you have so graphically described? Was the wife left desolate?

KATE. It has not ended yet,—God only knows what the end may be!

CLARA. Let me know, Kate; I feel interested. You will see that the husband will one day be found missing—an odd expression: found missing—and the lady will have mysteriously vanished at the same time.

KATE. (*Walking to door.*) I hope not,—I hope not!

CLARA. Where are you going?

KATE. Upstairs.

CLARA. Come to the drawing-room presently; the gentlemen must have nearly finished their wine. [*Exit KATE*]

How strange that I haven't seen him! I had hoped he would have made an excuse to leave the room, and come in search of me. Surely he cannot have forgotten that I promised him his answer to-day! Pshaw! this uneasiness of the mind is the very food of love! I'll think of something else. (*Taking up a book.*) Why doesn't he come? Ah!

*Enter RAFFLER.*

RAF. Miss Bellingham—alone! This is an opportunity not to be lost!

CLARA. Have you any business with me?

RAF. (*Sitting*) No business, for all my business is pleasure.

CLARA. Then seek it elsewhere,—you can have no pleasure with me.

RAF. I'm not so sure of that.

CLARA. Dear me, when I wished to be quiet! Mr. Raffler, you are becoming a nuisance!

RAF. I know it! Husbands are always nuisances, you know,—I am preparing myself.

CLARA. Really, your presence is unwelcome at this moment.

RAF. So I always say to my creditors, but they take no more heed than—than—

CLARA. You do.

RAF. Exactly. Now we have arrived at this friendly footing, let me explain my motives for disobeying you. It can hardly have escaped your memory that you promised to consider a very pretty little scheme I proposed to you a short time back.

CLARA. A little scheme? What was its purport?

RAF. Your future happiness.

CLARA. Then I am sure you were not concerned in it.

RAF. Pardon me, I proposed to transform you from a maid into a wife.

CLARA. I shall feel deeply indebted to you,—as long as you do not propose yourself for the place of husband.

RAF. That is it! The very place I presume to fill. Will you take me into your service?

CLARA. You have no character.

RAF. How can I have one, when I have never yet filled such a position!

CLARA. I am afraid you would not suit me.

RAF. But you would me! We are going over the old ground again. I am young—good looking——

CLARA. Self-recommendation!

RAF. Oh, no; Madame Snivelici told me so.

CLARA. And pray who is she?

RAF. Madame Snivelici is a danseuse, who prides herself upon her skill in dancing and in entangling men's hearts. Nature gave her two black eyes and a nimble foot; the former she uses with effect upon her admirers, the latter she uses with effect—not on her admirers, but on the boards.

CLARA. I presume she considers herself a judge of good looks?

RAF. No, I don't think so; I believe she told Lord Methuselah the same thing. He is our oldest English Baron, you know; he boasts that the founder of his family came over with the Conqueror; I wouldn't swear that it wasn't himself.

CLARA. Young—goodlooking—are these the whole of your good points?

RAF. By no means! Fortune has been kind to me. Young, goodlooking, thoroughbred—really, to enumerate them all would be a death-blow to your patience. However, Fortune forgot the best gift of all—money; but, instead, she generously gave me a marvellously developed taste for spending it. So you see that I only require money.

CLARA. You are frankness itself!

RAF. Oh, yes; I make no pretence as to my purpose. To be sure, I haven't any objection to good looks, good blood, youth, and so on being thrown in with the money. They necessitate a little more attention, perhaps, to the lady, but a handsome wife is a certain recommendation to a man.

CLARA. Like a handsome horse or dog.

RAF. Exactly; only there the analogy fails, for you can sell your horse or dog when you become tired of them, but a wife is a permanent incumbrance.

CLARA. I presume if you cannot obtain an incumbrance with youth and so on, as well as money, you will consent to take one whose only attraction is her fortune?

RAF. To be sure, if it is large enough. I'll engage that my friends will soon discover merit in her, when they learn the length of her purse. Money covers many blemishes. A man may gain a fortune by every roguery under the sun, but the world will fall at his feet and worship him. A woman may be a counterpart of Hecate herself, but if she possesses a hundred thousand in Consols, admirers will be as plentiful as gooseberries in the season.

CLARA. Then you think that money is the *summum bonum*—the great end of life.

RAF. Decidedly! It shows a want of sense to rail against money.

CLARA. Pray do you not think, by your own code, that I should show a certain want of sense in marrying you?

RAF. Perhaps so, but a woman may be excused for doing a foolish act. It suits her character better than a man's.

CLARA. I am glad you admit the foolishness of the act, and I think I cannot do better than avoid it.

*Enter Tom.*

TOM. I say, Charley, can you give me a word or two?

RAF. Plenty presently—and pretty strong ones. Confound this interruption!

CLARA. You don't know what a relief it is to me.

TOM. I am in rather a scrape.

RAF. And now you're in a fair way to find yourself in another. (To CLARA.) Pray let me remind you, that you promised to consider.

CLARA. But promises are only made to be broken.

RAF. Still, I am sure you will be generous enough—

CLARA. Generosity is a male virtue,—not a female one.

RAF. Then what am I to think?

CLARA. Think? (*Rising*) If you mean—think about, I should say the subject that interests you most—yourself.

RAF. But even the best subject tires one occasionally.

CLARA. You are quite right,—that is why I leave you (*Going*).

TOM. I want to tell you about this scrape of mine. This is how it is, I—

RAF. I shall conquer you yet.

CLARA. If pertinacity and good humour could do so, you would. *Au revoir!* [*Exit.*]

RAF. (*Half aside*). I wonder whether I am proceeding the right way.

TOM. That's just what I want to know about myself. I have got into a mess with Sir Hector about a lady.

RAF. She seems to like me.

TOM. Like you? No, no; she thought I was in love with her.

RAF. Is she in love with any one else? Perhaps there's another man.

TOM. Yes, that's just it ; I was only proposing on Sir Hector's behalf.

RAF. I'd have an understanding with him.

TOM. That's just what I want.

RAF. Or I'd run him through.

TOM. That's just what he wants.

RAF. (To TOM.) What are you talking about ?

TOM. I thought you were listening. Sir Hector wants to run me through.

RAF. Let him, and be welcome !

TOM. No, no ; you wouldn't like to lose me, Charley.

RAF. I would, Tom ; you're the damndest nuisance I ever came across !

TOM. You don't mean it. I wish you'd help me.

RAF. I'd sooner help Sir Hector—to run you through. You're like a bad half-crown, Tom, there's no getting rid of you !

TOM. But he can't mean it, can he ?

RAF. I hope he does.

TOM. But duelling's out of fashion.

RAF. A good thing if it's revived, Tom, to rid the world of some of your sort.

TOM. Would you advise me to send a note to the Chief Constable ?

RAF. By no means.

TOM. Why not ?

RAF. He'd stop it, Tom ; such a chance mayn't occur again.

TOM. I don't want to be run through.

RAF. No, but there are many who wish it, Tom, so you must yield to the majority.

TOM. Will you try to arrange matters with Sir Hector ?

RAF. On no account.

TOM. Why not ?

RAF. I repeat once more, this chance of getting rid of you mayn't occur again.

TOM. Is this your sympathy ?

RAF. A fair specimen of it.

TOM. After all I've done for you ?

RAF. I trust Sir Hector will return the compliment—and do for you.

TOM. After all I've lent you !

RAF. A mere bagatelle, Tom.

TOM. What return have I had ?

RAF. A very fair one. You have been lifted from the counter into good society ; you have deserted your fellow-cheesemongers for the *beau-monde*.

TOM. That's a lie ! I wasn't a cheesemonger.

RAF. Well, your father was,—the smell is hereditary.

TOM. I'm d——d if I ever lend you a penny again.

RAF. Very well, Tom (*rising*):

TOM. I'll cut your good society.

RAF. Cut cheeses, Tom,—more profitable.

TOM. I'll give them up altogether !

RAF. Quite right, they'll bear it. Bless you, Tom, I've given you the best advice I could. [Exit.]

TOM. Advice! A pretty sample I've had, indeed! There's no mincing it, I'm in a devil of a mess. I'm hedged in on both sides. On one, stands old Ohloe, with mysterious hints about "future happiness," "hearts beating in sympathy," "blissful hours," and such nonsense; and, on the other, there's Sir Hector, with his confounded letters about "pistols or swords," "nice little shady places," and so on. I've never fired a pistol or handled a sword, and, if I did know their use, duelling is such an unchristianlike practice that I wouldn't fight. If I could only shoot a gun off by accident and lay him up for a month! (*Enter BOWLINE.*) Hullo! Another letter, I suppose.

BOW. (*Handing letter.*) From Sir Hector, your honour.

TOM. Why, Bowline, we're becoming quite old acquaintances. It's very annoying your master should trouble me so with his handwriting. I should think he wrote with the hearth-broom; it nearly dislocates my jaw to read it.

BOW. Sir Hector will be here to explain it presently, your honour.

TOM. Oh, he's coming, is he?

BOW. Yes, your honour.

TOM. I'll try, then, whether I can't insinuate an explanation. Well, let's see what he says. (*Opening letter.*) Hum! "I am surprised," what's he surprised about—oh! "that I have received no replies to my former letters, and, therefore," what's this, "I shall follow this in proper—person—a——"

BOW. Maybe a little of some foreign lingo; Sir Hector's great at'em.

TOM. Ah, to be sure. "In propria persona. As you appear to be a little ignorant in these matters, though it is contrary to etiquette"—what the devil has etiquette to do with the matter?

BOW. We always shoots one another by rule, your honour. For instance, there's your seconds to measure the distance and so on; and there's the Surgeon to take off your leg, maybe, or to search your inside for a ball.

TOM. Search my inside for a ball! Good gracious! Don't say anything more,—the subject is not exhilarating. "Though it is contrary to etiquette, I shall be happy to meet you and explain what is necessary to be done. I send this by my a—s—s—assistant in the matter." So—so, he's going to shoot me by rule, is he, Bowline?

BOW. To be sure, your honour.

TOM. D—did you ever fight a duel, Bowline?

BOW. No, your honour, I've never done more'n look on.

TOM. Ah, t—that's what I should like, now; that's pleasant enough, and safer, ha! ha! You—you don't think, Bowline, that your master's horses will shy as he's going home, and pitch him on the crown of his head, do you?

BOW. Can't say, your honour, such things do happen sometimes.

TOM. They do, Bowline, they do; you're an honest fellow, Bowline. If it did happen, and he was laid up for a month, it—it would save me from any unpleasantness, wouldn't it?



Bow. Ay, so it would.

TOM. I don't want to have Sir Hector's blood on my hands, Bowline,—I'm a splendid shot; I could hit anything, I think; if an accident happened, Bowline, it—it would save him from my violence, you know.

Bow. (*Laughing*) Gur—r—h! Why you seems sort of afeard.

TOM. Afeard! No, no, you mistake me, Bowline,—I should like above all things to fight a duel; it isn't fear, you know, but—but you understand me, Bowline—

Bow. Ay, ay, I understands.

TOM. I'd sooner—as you said yourself, you know—look on, than take an active part. I should be as brave as a lion looking on, Bowline,—oh, yes, I should. It's safer—as you said, you know. Humanity is my weak point, Bowline.

Bow. Weak, indeed! Well, I think I could prevent it.

TOM. Do, do, Bowline. (*Giving him money.*) You don't know how my humanity would thank you! Horses shy, plump he goes on his head, you know.

Bow. I pities you, I do! Why, look'ee here, Sir Hector has no more thought of fighting you, than of flying.

TOM. Say you so? Why, devil take me if I don't—

Bow. Stop! He's only having a bit of fun with you.

TOM. D—e, he shall learn to his cost that I'm not to be trifled with. Death and fury! I'll carve him up like a trussed fowl. Humanity be blowed! I've the spirit of a lion!

Bow. He's cooled down, you know, and only wants an explanation.

TOM. Ay, he shall have it at the sword's point!

Bow. That's your weak point, maybe, your honour.

TOM. You're sure, Bowline—you're quite sure—that he never intended to fight?

Bow. Ay, certain,—only fun.

TOM. Then, Bowline, as I'm a man, I'll have his heart's blood! Where is he? Come on! Let's settle it this minute!

Bow. Your courage will be running out soon. Here is Sir Hector.

TOM. (*Aside*) Lord! It's all running out now.

*Enter SIR HECTOR.*

SIR H. Your servant, Mr. Tufthunt.

TOM. Yours, Sir Hector.

SIR H. You may go, Bowline. (*Aside.*) Did you tell him?

Bow. (*Aside*) Ay, your honour, and it turned him from a lamb to a lion. [*Exit.*]

SIR H. You must pardon me for the little part I've been playing.

TOM. Sir Hector,—I can never pardon you!

SIR H. I'm sorry I lost my temper—

TOM. Yes, I'm sorry for you.

SIR H. And that I didn't listen to the explanation you offered me. I am sure it would have been satisfactory.

TOM. It is a pity you did not accept it then. All is over now!

SIR H. Forgive me for the expressions I made use of; you must have smiled at their impotence.

TOM. Gad! I've done nothing but smile ever since.



SIR H. Duelling is at the best but a heathenish custom, and they who resorted to it to redress their injuries would only be laughed at in the age we live in.

TOM. I don't agree with you, sir; it is a custom I approve of. You called me by the most offensive epithets.

SIR H. But you must allow for my state of mind.

TOM. I am sorry I cannot! At the moment you entered, I was on the point of sending you a message by your servant, expressing my desire for a speedy meeting.

SIR H. But I assure you I had no intention of meeting you. I wasn't serious.

TOM. Ay, but I am! I demand an apology.

SIR H. I'll apologise to you with pleasure.

TOM. D——n your apologies! Do you take me for a coward!

SIR H. What can I do?

TOM. Such an insult must be washed out with blood,—mark you, Sir Hector, with blood!

SIR H. But I have apologised.

TOM. I don't want your confounded apologies, sir; I want to run a pistol through your body, and send a sword into your head! now then!

SIR H. I am an old man.

TOM. All the better, sir!

SIR H. I appeal to your humanity.

TOM. I have none, sir,—not a ha'p'orth!

SIR H. I throw myself——

TOM. (*Stepping back.*) Ah!

SIR H. On your mercy.

TOM. I have none, sir! I want your blood.

SIR H. Well, if I can satisfy you in no other way——

TOM. (*Aside*) Gad! he's not going to take me at my word, is he?

SIR H. If nothing else will suit you, I must prepare for the worst.

TOM. Nay, nay, Sir Hector, if you are really sorry——

SIR H. You have only to name your own place, time and weapons.

TOM. But, my dear Sir Hector——

SIR H. Swords or pistols.

TOM. My dear friend——

SIR H. Plenty of nice little shady places.

TOM. D——n your nice little shady places! Come, Sir Hector, I was rash to provoke you.

SIR H. An amputated limb, perhaps——

TOM. Don't give me the shivers, my dear Sir Hector.

SIR H. Or a coffin for one.

TOM. Pray don't, Sir Hector, pray don't! Duelling is at the best but a heathenish custom——

SIR H. But a custom you approve of.

TOM. Not between friends, Sir Hector, as you and I.

*Enter BABY at back.*

SIR H. But my apology?

You Tom. shall have it back.

SIR H. And an explanation ?

TOM. Forty explanations, if you wish.

SIR H. Well, give me your hand, then.

TOM. There you are, old friend.

SIR H. There shall be no duel.

TOM. Not for worlds.

SIR H. No blood spilt.

TOM. Not a drop.

SIR H. No amputated limb ?

TOM. Not a finger.

SIR H. No coffin ?

TOM. Not a nail ! (*Shaking hands.*)

SIR H. You are a brave fellow.

TOM. Ay, Sir Hector, I fancy I frightened you. But my humanity got the better of my valour.

SIR H. Come then, Tom, let me hear how it came about.

BABY. (*Coming forward.*) So, you two have made it up, have you ? Tom has told me all, Sir Hector and, if I don't blame him for his conduct with Aunt, I'm sure you have no cause to, for—don't tell, Sir Hector—Tom and I are going to be united in holy matrimony.

SIR H. You don't say so !

BABY. Yes, it's true, isn't it, Tom ?

TOM. Quite true, Sir Hector, for better or worse—

BABY. Until death do us part.

SIR H. Well, I congratulate you both. I could tell you a funny little story about—hem—when we are alone, Tom. I congratulate you, sir ; you will possess a wife, pretty, loving, and virtuous.

BABY. Oh, Sir Hector !

SIR H. And you, Baby, a husband, handsome and full of courage, but a friend to humanity.

TOM. Oh, Sir Hector ! Well, now, let me explain.

*Enter Miss CHILLINGWOOD at back.*

When you asked me to propose to Miss Chillingwood on your behalf, I thought it would be the easiest thing in the world to do ; but, somehow, I managed so badly that she construed it into a proposal made on my own account.

MISS C. (*Aside.*) What is this !

TOM. You will see, Sir Hector, the fault rather lies with you for choosing so indifferent an ambassador, than with me.

SIR H. Ambassadors occasionally exceed their instructions.

TOM. And then they are recalled,—that is sufficient punishment.

SIR H. I have no wish to recall you, Tom.

BABY. Why don't you talk sense ?

SIR H. (*To BABY.*) Would you have us become curiosities ?

TOM. You could not have been more surprised than I was when Miss Chillingwood embraced me.

SIR H. What would I not have given for that embrace !

TOM. I don't know, but I was very thankful to find that I had still a little breath in my body after it.

SIR H. Say no more, Tom ; I'll give you another trial.

TOM. Barring the embrace !

SIR H. You shall show your diplomacy and redeem yourself.

TOM. I will; 'pon my word, I will.

SIR H. Stay here. I am going to Sir Geoffrey before I leave, and, if I meet Miss Chillingwood, I'll tell her you particularly wish to see her.

[MISS CHILLINGWOOD goes behind curtain.

TOM. But no embrace!

SIR H. No, no; good night. Come, Baby, take me to your father. I've promised to listen while he reads me his latest pamphlet. I shall require all my energy to keep awake. Good night, Tom.

TOM. Good night, Sir Hector.

BABY. Come to the drawing-room presently, Tom.

TOM. All right, Baby; I'll be there. [Exeunt SIR HECTOR and BABY.] Ha! I experience a feeling of relief! I came off with flying colours. Gad! what a funny thing is courage; now strong, now weak; now mounting up and now oozing out! I think I astonished Sir Hector; he hardly expected I would meet him with so bold a front. Ah! we were always a brave race—the Tufthunts.

MISS C. (Coming forward.) Mr. Tufthunt!

TOM. Hullo! An echo, somewhere.

MISS C. Mr. Tufthunt, I have heard all.

TOM. Then, I have lost your esteem for ever!

MISS C. No, sir; I have for a long time had a very strong regard for Sir Hector, and if you can help me——

TOM. Help! Why, madam, he has asked me to propose to you for him.

MISS C. I know it; but I prefer the proposal to proceed directly from him.

TOM. Then you must lay in a large stock of patience.

MISS C. Not if you will assist me in a plan I have conceived.

TOM. Nothing will give me greater pleasure.

MISS C. You must know then, that Sir Hector has one fault.

TOM. I am aware of it, madam.

MISS C. Indeed?

TOM. He is too bashful a lover.

MISS C. No, no, I meant—dear me! I hardly dare to say it—he is rather addicted to wine.

TOM. A very general fault.

MISS C. Now, if you would lunch with him to-morrow and ply him well with wine——

TOM. I understand! Then, bring him here——

MISS C. I will see him alone, and have some of Geoffrey's fine old '48 port sent in,—he likes that!

TOM. If you are not successful, may I drink all that's left in the cellar!

MISS C. I shall depend upon you.

TOM. You may, firmly.

MISS C. I do not think I shall be overstepping the bounds of womanly modesty——

TOM. No, no; everything must give way to a husband.

MISS C. I must ask your pardon for that unfortunate caress——

TOM. Don't mention it, madam; only don't spare Sir Hector—he's a stronger man than I am.

MISS C. And if I can do anything in return—

TOM. Ay, there it is! Your niece, Baby—

MISS C. A spoilt child, sir.

TOM. But a good-hearted girl for all that.

MISS C. Well, sir; what of her?

TOM. Why, we seem to have been cut out from the same pattern; we are like a pair of boots—one's no use without the other.

MISS C. And I never suspected this!

TOM. Oh! We young ones are cunning, ma'am, devilish cunning! We can both boast of a fair amount of good looks, and our children, ma'am—

MISS C. Mr. Tufthunt!

TOM. Well, I was a little premature, perhaps. But we have a great affection for each other. Love is a very distressing ailment, but marriage is a blister that will soon cure it.

MISS C. Well, sir, you have my best wishes.

TOM. And your assistance?

MISS C. If you do your part with Sir Hector.

TOM. Done, madam; it's booked. Make your mind easy, Damon shall be yours.

MISS C. Damon! Is that Sir Hector's *nom-de-plume*, then?

TOM. Yes.

MISS C. Those verses came from him?

TOM. To be sure.

[Enter FRANK.]

FRANK. Where the deuce—hum—have you seen Miss Bellingham, Aunt?

MISS C. Not since dinner.

TOM. Come to the drawing-room, Sir Hector may not have left yet. If he's there, carry yourself rather distantly towards him, and we'll have the grand *coup* to-morrow.

MISS C. Mr. Tufthunt, I shall always have the warmest regard for you.

TOM. (*Aside*). That means, if Sir Hector falls away, I'm still available. Come, madam.

FRANK. (*As they are going up*) If you see Miss Bellingham—

MISS C. Well?

FRANK. Never mind! [*Exeunt* MISS CHILLINGWOOD and TOM. Heavens! When shall I be at ease again! I cannot bear this suspense, it is worse than death! Is she playing with me—toying away an idle hour with my heart! Why does she not come? If her answer be 'yes,' I will give up everything for her, and we'll go this very night! Bah! I shall go mad with much more delay! I have thought of nothing else this whole day,—waiting, waiting, waiting for her answer. Ha! here she is! [*Enter* KATE.]

Curse it! The one of all others, I did not wish to meet!

KATE. (*Going up to him timidly*.) Frank, dear.

FRANK. Well, Kate!

KATE. Tell me, dear, what I have done,—how I have offended you, that you have become so changed towards me?

FRANK. I, changed!

KATE. Oh, you cannot surely hide it from yourself. Confess, Frank, that I am right.

FRANK. Nonsense!

KATE. Yes, you have altered during the last few days. Frank, you used to be so true, so kind and loving to me, and now—you neglect me. What have I done, Frank?—tell me what I have done?

FRANK. Done! What can have put these ideas into your head, Kate; they are illusions—nothing more. I—I love you as well as ever.

KATE. Is this true, Frank?

FRANK. Why, of course; I am not in the habit of saying what I do not mean. While we continue in our unfortunate situation, I cannot pay you the same regard in public as I would do if our—if all was acknowledged, and we were free to confess our affection for each other.

KATE. Why do you leave me in this suspense; it is harder for me to bear than for you. How I wish you would summon up courage to speak out to the world!

FRANK. You are returning to the old forbidden topic, Kate. Am I to request you in vain to allow it to rest?

KATE. Ah, Frank, it is easy for you to say, let it rest; but you cannot look at it with my eyes. We cannot keep it a secret long, if you would not have my name spoken ill of, or——

FRANK. Enough, Kate, let us drop it for once and all! (*Aside*) I must get her away.

KATE. Frank, you cannot make me believe that I still retain your undivided love, when you allow yourself to speak in such terms to me——

FRANK. Soft words have no effect upon you.

KATE. I know the cause of this treatment, Miss Bellingham——

FRANK. Well, what of her?

KATE. Your manner has undergone too sudden an alteration to escape my notice. You used to take every opportunity of abusing her, and now——

FRANK. What! would you have me treat a guest with discourtesy! How have I mistaken you!

KATE. No, no, but you forget she was a guest then, as well as now. Women see these things intuitively, Frank, and I know you are in love with her.

FRANK. Kate, you do not know what you are saying! You are jealous without cause.

KATE. I am jealous, perhaps, but not without cause. Oh! Frank! Pause ere you commit some rash act. She cannot give you as true a love as mine. Mine is the love of a true woman, of a wife,—a love that can only perish with death; hers is a selfish passion——

FRANK. Do not speak against her—remember she is absent.

KATE. (*Clutching his arm.*) Oh, Frank, Frank! Forgive me if I pain you, but I must tell you what I feel. Let us leave this house, and fight against the world together; love will arm us, Frank, and we will battle bravely!

FRANK. (*Removing her arm.*) You are childish, Kate.

KATE. Can nothing I say move you? Then all is lost indeed! She is only playing with you—

FRANK. That will do! I'll hear no more.

KATE. Do not break my heart; I am your wife, Frank, and you must not wrong me.

FRANK. I'll bear your taunts no longer. Go! (*Pointing to door.*) And when you can speak sensibly, I'll hear you.

KATE. No, let me stay.

FRANK. Go! or I'll never see you again!

KATE. Oh, unkind! unkind! (*going*) Is this the Frank I love, —he cannot be so changed! (*Exit sobbing. As she leaves, FRANK makes a stride to door.*)

FRANK. (*Calling*) Kate! Kate! Come back—come back! (*Throwing himself in chair.*) D—n me, for a black-hearted villain! Poor Kate! I'll not break thy heart! I am not worthy of thy love! I will take thy advice,—we'll leave this cursed house, and seek fortune together. Am I bewitched? Ha, Clara! Do I love her,—Can I live without her? But Kate I love, and she is my wife. And Clara,—she loves me, she does love me! But Kate loves me, and she is my wife. Clara! How grand and noble she is! But Kate,—she is good and beautiful, and she is my wife! Clara! Must I give her up! (*Rising*) Yes,—I'll be a man! I'll break this spell which is upon me. I'll give up all thoughts of—Ah, Clara! No, no! I'll break this spell. Kate, we will fly, we will—this very night. (*Moving to door, by which KATE left*) Yes! this night! [*Enter CLARA.*]

CLARA. Mr. Chillingwood—Frank! (*He turns*) Are you going upstairs?

FRANK. Upstairs?

CLARA. I beg your pardon,—pray don't let me prevent you.

FRANK. No, no; I wasn't going.

CLARA. Do you know why I wish to see you?

FRANK. (*Aside*) I cannot—I cannot resist! (*Running to CLARA*) Clara! tell me, tell me your answer. I have been racked with suspense all night and day! (*Seizing her hand*) Clara, dear Clara, let me know my fate!

CLARA. I—I don't know—what to say.

FRANK. Do you deny me your love? Then, I am miserable, indeed!

CLARA. No, no.

FRANK. You give it me?

CLARA. What must I say?

FRANK. Say yes.

CLARA. Yes.

FRANK. (*Kissing her warmly*) Oh, Clara, you have made one man the happiest in the world!

CLARA. There is only one thing that displeases me.

FRANK. What is it?

CLARA. It is your friend's wish.

FRANK. Why should that displease you?

CLARA. There is no merit in our loving each other, when it has been previously arranged in family council,—by those who pro-

bably have foresworn love these twenty years! If either of us were poor or low-born, our friends would have set their faces against a match, and I should have enjoyed a triumph in becoming your wife.

FRANK. My wife! But—but—

CLARA. Now, it will displease none; everybody will come with a smiling face to congratulate us, and wish us many years of happiness,—a dull and prosaic marriage. Oh! I wish it had been otherwise.

FRANK. Clara! (*Taking her hand*).

CLARA. Well?

FRANK. I have kept something back from you.

CLARA. Have you? What is it?

FRANK. A secret.

CLARA. Then you had better not divulge it.

FRANK. It is one affecting you deeply.

CLARA. What is it?

FRANK. I am afraid it will make you hate me! Clara, tell me you will not despise me?

CLARA. Let me hear it first.

FRANK. I—I am married!

CLARA. Married! To whom?

FRANK. (*Aside*) I cannot mention poor Kate's name. (*Aloud*) Do not ask me.

CLARA. I do not press your confidence.

FRANK. Her name cannot affect the question one way or the other. It is enough that my love has been transferred to you.

CLARA. Do I know her?

FRANK. I—I think you do. Clara, have I forfeited your love by this confession?

CLARA. (*Aside*) This is a triumph indeed!

(*Kate appears at back for a moment, and then conceals herself behind curtain.*)

FRANK. You will not withdraw your love!

CLARA. Why should I? I have all the more reason to love one who is willing to give up wife, perhaps child, father, home, everything—for my sake!

FRANK. You look at it too indulgently! I give up nothing in comparison with you. You lose your place in the world—your reputation.

CLARA. And so do you.

FRANK. To be sure, but a woman's reputation—

CLARA. Sinks beneath a woman's love! Frank, you blamed me for my notion of things, but you see my education aids you now! Who sacrifices most? I lose the world's—my world's esteem. Esteem, indeed! What have they done for me that I should fear the loss of their paltry esteem! A nothing with a name! shall I miss them? will they miss me? A paragraph in the paper—a week's talk over the latest scandal,—and all is over! Shall I consider the mere disturbing the notions of propriety of a few, when my love—my life is concerned! No, Frank, never! never! And you? You lose a wife's love perhaps, a child's affection perhaps, a happy



home and reputation. Shall I put my poor sacrifices into the balance with yours! No, I love you, Frank, as I never thought I could love, and I fear to lose nothing, if you will only love me!

FRANK. Of that, be assured. But let us act now, Clara; the time for further consideration has passed! Let us leave this house to-night—now! We shall not be missed, until we are miles away. Let us seize this opportunity. You are not afraid, Clara?

CLARA. Afraid! No! I will come; no time is better than the present. There need be no delay,—in two minutes I will be with you.

FRANK. I will wait.

CLARA. No, no, you are not calm enough to remain here. If anyone should enter, suspicion might be aroused! Go outside, and wait for me.

FRANK. And you?

CLARA. I will be with you in two minutes.

FRANK. But if you are interrupted?

CLARA. I have it! (*Lighting one of two candles and opening shutters*) Station yourself by that clump of trees. If I light this other candle, all is safe; if I blow out this one, it will be a sign to you that our flight must be deferred. If two, be ready; if one, appear as usual.

FRANK. Do not prolong my suspense more than need be! God bless you, Clara! (*Kissing her.*) [Exit.]

CLARA. This is a moment worth a life's ransom! To-morrow, I may fall, but to-night, I triumph! A triumph indeed! A triumph indeed! [Exit.]

(*KATE emerges from window, sobbing.*)

KATE. Oh! what have I heard! Heaven—heaven have pity on me! Frank, Frank, do not leave me! Oh! my heart! my heart! What do I suffer! Do not leave me, my husband, Frank, Frank! (*Sinks into chair, sobbing, and burying her face.*)

*Enter CLARA, with cloak and hat.*

CLARA. (*Seeing Kate*) Who is this? Kate—in tears! Ha! I see it! The wife—his wife! (*Proceeds to table, and is going to light candle.*) Poor Kate! (*Puts candle down, and presses her hand to her heart. Takes it up again, then puts it down, resolutely.*) I cannot harm her—I will not! (*Blows the lighted candle out. Stage darkened.*)

## ACT. V.

SCENE—*Same as in Act I. BABY and LETTY discovered.*

BABY. And so you saw them going into the Church, Letty?

LET. Yes, Miss, as calm and collected as if they were going to a funeral.

BABY. That's not the sort of wedding I should like.

LET. Nor I, I warrant, Miss.

BABY. I should like to have everything done in style, and so I shall, Letty, when Mr. Tufthunt and I are married.

LET. La! Miss, are you going to wed with that funny gentleman?

BABY. I am thinking of it, Letty, and if I do, I'll have everything done in first-class style. I like to see a good wedding,—plenty of carriages and horses, lots of people staring at you and envying you; a good breakfast, and tears on going away.

LET. I don't hold with tears, Miss. Why should you cry when you've got the very thing you want—a husband? Time enough to cry when you meet a man you would have liked better.

BABY. Well, never mind that,—how did Miss Bellingham look?

LET. Like a statue, Miss; rather paler than usual, and without any expression in her face.

BABY. And Mr. Raffler?

LET. As cool as if he was entering a shop to buy a pair of gloves.

BABY. As they have done it so privately, Letty, we ought to keep silence on the matter until they openly declare it. I won't say a word about it,—except to Tom.

LET. Nor I, Miss,—except to the butcher's young man. Here's Miss Kate and Mister Frank coming in.

BABY. Well, let's go then, for, if I see them, I'm sure I must tell them. I never could keep a secret, Letty, unless I locked myself up alone until I forgot it. *[Exeunt BABY and LETTY.]*

*Enter FRANK and KATE.*

FRANK. Am I forgiven, Kate? I know I have wronged you deeply, and that you would have good right to withhold your forgiveness. I was mad, Kate,—that is my excuse,—but the fit has passed off, and I am myself again.

KATE. *(Holding his arm.)* You cannot know, Frank, how grateful I am to God that it has prevented you from committing so dreadful a crime; and, if He has forgiven you, I do with all my heart! I am a poor-spirited girl, Frank, and have no passion but love in my nature. Love is the parent of forgiveness, and I am but too thankful to possess your love again.

FRANK. You are the ideal of a good woman, Kate. Fve was your prototype—pure, innocent, and loving. There is a bastard breed of women, who arrogate to themselves the strong passions of a man; these are they who lead men to destruction; such as you are the bright ladders by which men mount to heaven.

KATE. Are you sure, Frank, the temptation will not return?

FRANK. I am certain of it. Here is her letter; it was handed me in my room last night. (*Reading*). "I have tempted you, and God only knows how far my passion might have led me had I not discovered who was the woman I was wronging. Love her as she deserves to be loved; henceforth all is over between us. I have loved deeply; I have learnt what love is—I shall never love again. To-morrow I shall take a step that will put a barrier between us for ever."

KATE. What does she mean?

FRANK. I don't know; this day will tell us.

KATE. See how the paper is blotted, Frank; her tears did that. Poor Clara! She must have suffered, too, to make so great a sacrifice.

FRANK. Do you feel stronger now, Kate?

KATE. Yes, I am much better.

FRANK. Then I will tell my father all this day.

KATE. Oh, Frank, have you considered—

FRANK. Why, dear, you have yourself pressed me often to take this step.

KATE. But I would not have you quarrel with your father now that I am sure of your love.

FRANK. Kate, we will have no more of this underhand work. I will tell him; if he is wise he will frankly accept the situation; if not, then my wife and I will quit a house where we are not welcome.

KATE. Pray don't be rash, Frank.

*Enter CLARA and RAFFLER, dressed for walking.*

FRANK. Miss Bellingham—

CLARA. Mrs. Raffler, if you please! I have bestowed my hand and fortune on this gentleman, and have the honour to be allied to the noble house of Beggerley.

FRANK. Married?

RAF. 'Gad, Frank, its true. We've gone and committed matrimony, and are sentenced to pass the remainder of our natural lives in each other's company.

CLARA. A severe punishment, Kate, for so small a crime.

KATE. But, how sudden!

RAF. Oh, licenses are easily obtained,—and cheap—dirt cheap.

FRANK. Let me congratulate you—

CLARA. Pray don't! I have been repenting ever since I left the church, and I am terribly afraid our marriage will be a happy one. Poor Raffler bought a ring just one size too small, and it threatened to break off the match. However, by the united force of the clergyman and my husband—dear me! how the word sticks in my throat—it was at length placed on my finger.

RAF. Yes, and then I thought I had left the license behind, but, luckily, I found it wedged between the two latest writs.

[KATE and CLARA behind.]

FRANK. Well, I'm sure you're to be congratulated.

RAF. Faith, that's true, and Life begins to have a rosy-coloured appearance. An excellent match, Frank! Won't the fellows at the clubs stare when they hear that Charley Raffler has married ten thousand pounds per annum!

FRANK. With a charming encumbrance attached to it.

RAF. You're right. By-the-by, Frank, I must trouble you for a small matter of a hundred pounds.

FRANK. What!

RAF. You surely don't forget our bargain,—a hundred pounds to my account if I took Clara off your hands.

FRANK. By Jove! it's a true bill; you shall have it.

RAF. I wonder, now, you didn't try for Clara yourself. If I hadn't been here, you might have stood a fair chance.

FRANK. Well, it wasn't exactly your presence that prevented me, but an obstacle of another kind. Concealment is no longer necessary, so you shall learn what it was. Kate, will you come here?

KATE. What is it?

FRANK. (*Taking her hand*) Let me introduce you to Mr. Raffler as—Mrs. Frank Chillingwood.

RAF. 'Gad! Another private marriage!

FRANK. Oh, ours has been celebrated these four months.

RAF. What a close fellow you are! I have already sent tidings of mine under the strictest confidence to several of my friends—it will be all over the town in a week.

CLARA. (*to KATE*). Kate, you have pardoned me?

KATE. Clara, your generosity has left me deeply indebted to you.

CLARA. If you had told me all at first—but, however, it's all over now. I think, Kate, I deserve your good opinion, for it was a hard struggle, believe me.

KATE. You have it, Clara, I assure you.

CLARA. Well, we shall leave to-day; it will be some time before we meet again, but we shall always be friends.

KATE. Always.

CLARA. We are so totally opposed in character, that there is a chance of our friendship being something more than a mere name.

FRANK (*to RAFFLER*). Where do you go to?

RAF. (*to CLARA*) Where do we go to, Clara, for our honeymoon? You see, Frank, we've only been able to get married as yet, and have had no time to think of anything else.

CLARA. Honeymoon! Had we not better make an exception to the general rule, and do without one? Are you not due at Newmarket about this time of the year?

RAF. Well, it's true I have some engagements there, but a wedding—in which I have taken the part of bridegroom—is somewhat of a novelty to me, so I'll just run over the course with my wife first.

FRANK. Shall you inform my father of what has taken place?

RAF. I shall see. I think he will be a little surprised to hear it; but in case I have no time to tell him, you will oblige me by assuring him that I did all I could to promote a marriage between Clara and yourself, and that, failing in the attempt, I offered myself as a victim.

FRANK. What! did he ask your assistance?

RAF. Yes; and, what is better, paid for it.

KATE. (*to Clara*) We shall make our secret public to-day, and we are rather anxious to see how Sir Geoffrey will receive the news.

CLARA. Shall I undertake it?

RAF. (*by window*) 'Gad! here's little Tom coming up; you couldn't have a better ambassador.

FRANK. Do you think so?

RAF. Yes. If your father takes it coolly, so much the better; if he gets angry, Tom will receive the first explosion of his rage, and by the time he sees you it will have evaporated. I owe Tom a grudge.

FRANK. I hardly like to get him into trouble.

RAF. Don't mind that! If you don't, he's sure to get into trouble of his own making. I've never known the time yet that someone wasn't longing to pull Tom's nose. Come, Clara, we are wasting precious moments; we leave in an hour.

CLARA. Ah, Kate, don't you pity me? For my part, I am full of anxiety to find materials for a good quarrel.

[*Exeunt CLARA and RAFFLER; TOM heard singing without.*]

FRANK. I shall take Raffer's advice, Kate; Tom shall do our business.

KATE. Here he is.

*Enter TOM singing, by window; hat and coat rather dirty.*

TOM. Ri-tol-de-rol-de-diddle-dol, ri-dol-de-rol-de-ray. Ah, Frank, Sir Hector and I have been enjoying ourselves.

FRANK. What have you been doing?

TOM. Studying the fine arts.

KATE. What?

TOM. Drawing, Sir—we're artists, we are; oh, yes! we've been drawing corks the last two hours, and playing a jolly tune upon the bottle.

FRANK. You've been painting your countenance a little, too.

TOM. 'Gad! I do feel a little flushed! The air has somewhat revived me, for, upon my word, when I left I made the most extraordinary movements. I tumbled over the foot-scraper, just as Sir Hector tripped over the doormat; we tried to shake hands, but found it so difficult to bring 'em together, that it was given up as a bad job. I tried to climb up a haystack, and sat down upon a scythe; I frightened the village sexton by pulling at the church bell-rope; I saw an old woman of a hundred and fifty, and made the most frantic attempts to embrace her, but she had a crutch in her hand, and caught me just twenty-seven times on the back of my cranium; I tried to jump over a style, and came down



head foremost on to my hat ! I think I crushed it. (*Looking at it.*) Yes, it is crushed. Well, I feel better now, but Sir Hector's wine is damnably powerful !

FRANK. Ha ! ha ! Tom, allow me to introduce you to my wife.

TOM. Your wife—Miss Lawrence ?

FRANK. Mrs. Frank Chillingwood, now. You're an excellent good-hearted fellow, Tom, and I want you to do me a favour.

TOM. I know you do.

FRANK. How ?

TOM. You begin by praising me—a sure sign. People never praise me unless they want to make use of me, or my purse. When Lord Topnot meets me in the street and says, 'How are you, my dear Tom, this morning ?' or when Lady Flutter smiles upon me and whispers, "I am so glad to see you—you are such excellent company, Mr. Tufthunt,"—I know what it means. Lord ! I'm not to be imposed upon in that way.

FRANK. Well, will you do me a favour ?

TOM. I answer you as I do others, by saying "With pleasure !" and then doing it or not when I have learnt the nature of the favour.

FRANK. I want you to tell my father I am married.

TOM. Oh, I don't mind doing that—no more than if you were buried.

FRANK. I know you're a prodigious favourite with him.

TOM. Oh, yes ; we're as thick as peas.

FRANK. He'll take anything from you.

TOM. Yes, and I'll take anything from him,—except his pamphlets.

FRANK. You can get round him.

TOM. Oh, I can square him.

FRANK. Tell him you think I've done well,—he's a great regard for your opinion.

TOM. Has he ? He never told me so, but I don't doubt it. People are very fond of asking my opinion,—the only wonder is how few take it.

FRANK. Make him laugh ; say something funny before you tell him.

TOM. 'Gad ! If I did, he'd never see it ; he hasn't a laugh in him. I tell him twenty funny things a day, and he's as blind as a bat.

FRANK. How, blind ?

TOM. Why, he can't see the point of one of them.

FRANK. Well, Kate, thank our friend Tom for his good nature.

KATE. I am sure Mr. Tufthunt will believe me to be very grateful for his kindness.

FRANK. There ! Now take the first opportunity, Tom, and I shall be happy if an occasion arises to do you a service in return.

[*Exeunt FRANK and KATE.*]

TOM. Well ! I think I must be the most good-natured fellow in existence, for my friends are always begging favours of me, and I haven't the heart to refuse. Old Sir Geoffrey will take anything from me ! 'Gad ! I think that's true enough, and at the same

time that I tell him of Frank's marriage, I'll urge a plea on my own behalf for his daughter's hand. He can hardly be so ill-mannered as to refuse me, for I think I'm pretty eligible. Ha!

*Enter Miss CHILLINGWOOD and BABY.*

MISS C. Mr. Tufthunt, I am all anxiety to know the result of your conversation with Sir Hector.

TOM. Well, ma'am, we didn't talk much—but we drank a good deal.

MISS C. What was the result, Sir?

TOM. Why, our utterance got rather thick, and——

MISS C. The result of your conversation?

TOM. Oh! Well, Sir Hector will be here shortly, that I promise you. So far, I have performed my part; the rest is with you.

BABY. I hope Sir Hector didn't take too much.

TOM. No; we both stopped on the borderland of reason. Another bottle, and we should have suffered the fate of the first Charles.

BABY. What's that?

TOM. Lost our heads.

MISS C. Pray, Sir, did Sir Hector speak much of me?

TOM. Well, his intention was rather confined to his bottle, but he did make one complimentary observation.

MISS C. What was that?

TOM. He said he'd like to treat you as he did his glass,—put his lips to you.

MISS C. For shame!

TOM. Oh, no, for he was continually doing it.

MISS C. Was that the only remark he made?

TOM. He said it was remarkable what a little a bottle held, and I thought it was remarkable what a lot he held.

MISS C. But about me?

TOM. Nothing more than that he was resolved to pluck up courage on the first occasion he could meet you alone.

MISS C. That will do; I am greatly obliged to you, and shall take care to perform my part.

*(Exit Miss CHILLINGWOOD.)*

TOM. Well, Baby, I intend asking your father to give me his permission to marry you to-day.

BABY. Marry me to-day? Why, its too late.

TOM. To ask his permission to-day, I mean.

BABY. Don't you think that my permission may as well be obtained, too?

TOM. You have given it.

BABY. Oh, no, you hav'n't asked for it.

TOM. On several occasions.

BABY. Not in the right way. I have been reading some love scenes lately, and the correct thing is for the lover to go down on his knees, and talk like a Quaker—thee-ing and thou-ing.

TOM. Am I to go down on my knees, then?

BABY. Yes, I command you to do so. If I'm to obey you after marriage, it's only right that you should obey me now.

TOM. But what am I to do, when I go down on my knees?

BABY. Get up again—when I tell you.

TOM. But what shall I say?  
BABY. Something about raven locks, black eyes, ruby lips—  
TOM. Yours or mine?  
BABY. Mine, of course.  
TOM. But I could say this standing.  
BABY. That would be better than lying, but kneeling is the proper position.  
TOM. Here goes, then. (*kneeling*) Adorable creature!  
BABY. I'm not a creature, Tom.  
TOM. Adorable—adorable—I can't think of a good word; it's because I'm kneeling.  
BABY. Creature's very low. Try, angel.  
TOM. That's very high! Well—Adorable angel!  
BABY. Go on, you stupid!  
TOM. Now, don't talk like that,—angels never do. I love thee, sweet one—  
BABY. Oh! You are a booby!  
TOM. (*rising*) 'Gad! if the angel's going to descend to abuse, the booby won't hurt his shins any more.  
BABY. You've got no sentiment.  
TOM. Very little, I believe.  
BABY. You've no warmth in you.  
TOM. Haven't I? Let me press you to my heart.  
BABY. You never call me pretty names.  
TOM. I never call anyone names.  
BABY. You fancy I'm a girl.  
TOM. I hope you are.  
BABY. You're not half a lover.  
TOM. I'm better,—I'm a whole one!  
BABY. When Dick came courting me—  
TOM. Oh! hang it, here's Dick again! You treat poor Dick as so much mud,—always throwing him in my face. You're like a lady who is always praising the memory of her first husband to her second, until she makes the poor man wish himself in his predecessor's grave.  
BABY. Now you're trying to commence a quarrel.  
TOM. Well, then, Baby, don't bring up Dick again, for I'm quite sick of him myself. There! Give me a kiss, and own that you're glad I'm going to speak to your father.  
BABY. Well, I'm not sorry, Tom.  
(*SIR GEOFFREY's voice heard, without.*)  
TOM. There's his voice; you can hear it all over the house. That poor secretary must give him some hard words behind his back.  
*Enter SIR GEOFFREY, with papers, &c.*  
SIR G. (*by door, speaking to Arnold without*) Mind you don't forget that important communication on 'Private Asylums.'  
TOM. 'Gad! there's some hope for him, now he's reached that subject. Go behind, Baby.  
SIR G. (*coming and going*) And write to the 'Post' denying the statement that I am the author of that trumpery pamphlet. Ha, Tufthunt. This is pleasant, isn't it? (*reading from news-*



*paper*) "We understand that Sir Geoffrey Ohillingwood is the author of the pamphlet on Metropolitan Misgovernment. Certainly there are many indications that point to him as the writer, for the language is always pompous and affected, the style heavy and verbose, the satire dull——"

TOM. Don't mind it, Sir Geoffrey, it's only the rancour of party.

SIR G. Mind it! Oh, no it's amusing, really—language pompous and affected, style heavy—ha! ha! it's extremely pleasant.

TOM. (*aside*) 'Gad! he's in a good humour; now's the time to tell him. I hear, Sir Geoffrey, you've failed in one of your family projects.

SIR G. How?

TOM. No fault of yours, of course; but everyone knows that you wished to make a match between Frank and Miss Bellingham.

SIR G. Perfectly true.

TOM. What, hav'n't you heard? 'Gad! then, they've nicely sold you between them.

SIR G. What do you mean?

TOM. Ha! ha! It makes me laugh. Ha! ha! Why, don't you know that Frank has already disposed of himself?

SIR G. Married, do you mean?

TOM. Married! And here he comes, bringing his wife with him.

*Enter FRANK and KATE.*

SIR G. Kate! Is it true, Sir, that you have thought proper to marry that young lady?

FRANK. Quite true.

SIR G. Then, Sir, I presume you have also thought proper to make some provision for yourself and wife to live on, for you need not apply to me.

FRANK. My dear father——

TOM. 'Gad! Sir Geoffrey, consider that young fellows——

SIR G. D——n it, Sir, you must interfere, must you! If you were not a guest under my roof, I should inform you I considered you a d——d intermeddling little jackass!

FRANK. Pray, confine your anger to me, Sir, if anyone is to blame.

TOM. 'Gad! I hope he will, for his words have a most uncomplimentary sound about them.

SIR G. *to FRANK*) Sir, I have nothing to say to you; you have chosen to marry without consulting me, therefore you and your wife may go and starve without troubling me.

TOM. That's devilish hard, Sir Geoffrey.

SIR G. Oh, you will interfere, will you!

TOM. No, I'm dumb!

FRANK. I think I have some claim upon you, Sir, although I have consulted my own wishes alone on so personal a matter as my marriage. I have always shown you the greatest respect.

SIR G. Give it to your wife, Sir; I've done with you for ever.

TOM. Sir Geoffrey, if you'll allow me——

SIR S. Oh, you will have a word!

TOM. No, I'm as silent as the tomb!

FRANK. Will you allow me to explain——



SIR G. Mr. Frank Chillingwood, the only favour you can do me is to remove yourself and your baggage, including your wife, from my house.

FRANK. Very well, Sir. Come, Kate.

TOM. Wait a moment, I'm going to soften him. Baby!

BABY. (*Advancing*) Well, Tom?

TOM. (*Taking her hand*) Sir Geoffrey, I seize this auspicious moment to ask your permission to unite the families of the Tufthunts and the Chillingwoods. They are both old families; yours came over with the Conqueror, mine were here some considerable time before that, occupying a very high position, I'm told. One of them certainly died in a very exalted state, for he was hanged! Here are Baby and myself, two young and healthy representatives; we ask your permission to marry.

SIR G. I do not think it is possible you could have chosen a worse moment to propose this union to me.

TOM. Consider it unsaid, then; we'll wait until you're in a better humour.

SIR G. What! At a time when I have been so cruelly deceived in my son—when he has wounded me, an indulgent father, to the very heart—when he has come with a brazened face to acquaint me with his unfilial conduct—when he has disobeyed my earnest command, you must needs ask my permission to wed my daughter! Go, Sir, go! and weep the bitter tears of repentance, from my sight!

TOM. Come, Baby, we'll go and weep.

[*Exeunt* BABY and TOM.]

SIR G. 'Gad! That was a magnificent burst, eh, Frank? True eloquence, that—hum! hum!—real oratory! If I could only give them something like that in the House, it would startle them, eh, Frank?

FRANK. It would indeed, Sir, and I—

SIR G. Don't speak to me, unfilial boy—unfilial youth! (*Half aside.*) That's better, a good phrase. (*Aloud.*) You may as well go also, and weep the bitter tears—no, the—a—the chastened—that's it—the chastened tears of rep—of a bitter repentance—the chastened tears of a bitter repentance. Go, Sir! (*Half aside.*) I improve every word; I'll go and write that phrase down; perhaps I can bring it in somewhere. [*Exit with papers.*]

FRANK. Well, he's amusing, if nothing else.

KATE. Do you think he'll forgive us, Frank?

FRANK. If he can elaborate a few more pompous phrases, they'll open his heart. [*Enter Footman with salver.*]

FOOT. A telegram, Sir.

[*Exit.*]

FRANK. (*Opening it*) What's this! Why, it must be for my father. (*Looking at envelope.*) Yes, so it is. (*Reading*) "Government defeated. Resignation already sent in. Prepare for election." Kate, I see the way to a reconciliation; this will do it. Come with me, and we'll plan it together.

[*Exeunt* KATE and FRANK.]

(TOM peeps in and enters, followed by SIR HECTOR and FOOTMAN.)



TOM. Come along, Damon. I've done a foolish thing, and nearly lost my own suit, but that shan't affect my promise to serve you. Come along, my little poet, I'll send for Chloe.

SIR H. No, no! I think——

TOM. Nonsense! Charles, inform Miss Chillingwood that Sir Hector is here.

FOOT. Yes, Sir.

[*Exit.*

TOM. Now, then, my dear Damon, sit down and let me comfort you, until your divinity makes her appearance.

SIR H. Don't—don't leave me alone with her.

TOM. No, no, the wine will be between you; pay attention alternately to the lady and the bottle. When the wine is in, you know, the truth comes out.

SIR H. Couldn't we put it off till to-morrow? I hav'n't quite got over the effects of our bout this morning.

TOM. All the better! You're so much nearer the point.

SIR H. You are certain she won't refuse me?

TOM. I am sure of it.

SIR H. I think a refusal would kill me.

TOM. Would it! Oh, here comes the wine. (*Enter Footman, with wine.*) Bottled in '48!

[*Exit Footman.*

SIR H. You don't say so!

TOM. It's old enough to put a little wisdom in you, isn't it? Take a glass or two before she comes.

SIR H. (*Drinking*) Ah, glorious! I feel better after it.

TOM. I should have ordered brandy, but you've plenty of spirit in you; the difficulty is to get it to rise to the surface.

SIR H. I'll make an eloquent proposal—something poetical.

TOM. I wouldn't! Give it her in good round prose; she may understand that.

SIR H. By Jove! I think I'll do it this time.

TOM. That's right! Take another glass, and you'll be sure of it.

SIR H. I feel full of courage.

TOM. Well, don't let it run out with the bottle. Here's Chloe.

*Enter Miss CHILLINGWOOD.*

Sir Hector is very desirous of seeing you, Miss Chillingwood.

SIR H. No, no! upon my soul I——

TOM. I believe he has some important subject on which he wishes to consult you.

MISS C. Consult me! I am sure it is paying a great compliment to my judgment. (*Sitting down.*)

SIR H. No, no, I really hav'n't the slightest wish——

TOM. Of course not. Sir Hector would have you understand that it is not so much a compliment to you as a compliment from you to give him the benefit of your judgment.

MISS C. Really, Sir Hector says such pretty things——

SIR H. Are you going, Tom? because I think I'll——

TOM. To be sure; you wish to be alone, so I'll withdraw. (*Rising.*)

SIR H. Don't—don't leave——

TOM. The house? Oh, no; you will find me near at hand when you have finished your consultation. (*Aside*) Don't be a coward!

MISS C. Sir Hector seems to wish you to remain.

SIR H. Yes, yes! indeed I should if——

TOM. I understand perfectly. Sir Hector would like me to be present, if the subject on which he wishes to speak were not of so private a nature. (*Aside*) Take another glass. (*Going*.)

SIR H. (*Rising and going*) Wait! I want——

TOM. Yes, I'll see to it while you are here. (*Leading him to chair*) Miss Ohillingwood, perhaps Sir Hector would take a glass of wine at your invitation. Poor fellow! he's had nothing for so long a time that he must really feel faint. (*Aside*) Now, if they don't arrive at a settlement this time, I shall decline to assist them further. [*Exit*.]

MISS C. Help yourself, Sir Hector.

SIR H. Thank you. (*Helping himself*.)

MISS C. What a charming day it is!

SIR H. Yes.

MISS C. So bright and warm.

SIR H. Yes.

MISS C. So delightful for walking!

SIR H. Yes.

MISS C. Help yourself, Sir Hector.

SIR H. Thank you.

MISS C. It puts me in mind of that charming description——

Said Damon to Chloe, one fine summer's day,

SIR H. (*Aside*) Why, that's mine.

As he pillowed his head on her breast——

MISS C. Do you know it? I think it charming. Let me help you, Sir Hector. (*Helping him*.)

Oh, merciless Fate, why dost call me away,

SIR H.—

When I long to remain here at rest.

MISS C. Beautiful! Oh, that I were a poet, or even the companion of a poet! what exquisite creations would we make together; he writing, and I finding the words in a rhyming dictionary.

Oh! why can I not be allowed to remain——

SIR H.—

Dear Chloe, for e'er by thy side——

MISS C.—

But, alas, 'tis my duty to cross the salt main——

SIR H.—

And over its billows to ride.

MISS C. Oh! it is too much; it goes to my heart. (*Filling his glass. He gets a little closer*.)

By yonder blue sky, by thine own azure eyes——

SIR H.—

By all that's below and above——

MISS C.—

There's nothing within this wide world that I prize,

SIR H.—

Except my dear Chloe's sweet love.

Ah! Chloe's love!

MISS C. Chloe's love! (*Filling his glass*.) Oh, that some Damon would address me in such words!

SIR H. (*Closer*.) Damon? Damon is here.

MISS C. Where?

SIR H. By your side. I—I am Damon.

MISS C. Did you write those beautiful verses?

SIR H. Yes—yes, I wrote them—wrote them for you!

MISS C. For me?

SIR H. You are Chloe.

MISS C. (*Filling his glass.*) Oh, say, dear Sir Hector, what you mean.

SIR H. I mean that I—that I——

MISS C. Yes—yes!

SIR H. I can't—I can't say it.

MISS C. Oh, try!

SIR H. I mean that I feel towards you as Damon expressed himself towards Chloe.

MISS C. (*Filling his glass.*) But Damon spoke of love.

SIR H. Yes, and I—I mean love.

MISS C. Oh, Sir Hector, had I known this before how happy it would have made me; for I have long felt a passion for you.

SIR H. It is not too late!

MISS C. Oh, no!

SIR H. Will you—will you be mine?

MISS C. I will, Sir Hector. (*Throwing herself on his neck, as Tom enters.*)

TOM. (*Covering his eyes.*) Oh! Sir Hector, I can guess the object of your visit. You have succeeded.

SIR H. Yes, Tom, yes.

TOM. I congratulate you; you certainly deserve success after your persevering courtship. I publish the banns of matrimony between Damon and Chloe, both of this parish! I wish you every happiness.

*Enter SIR GEOFFREY.*

SIR G. Hullo! What's this?

SIR H. Why, you see, old friend, I've at last found courage to propose to your sister, and, in a short time, you may expect she will desert you.

SIR G. 'Gad! this is the only comforting piece of news I've heard this day.

MISS C. You may say what you like, Geoffrey, but who will be able to take care of your household when I'm gone?

SIR G. (*Aside.*) That's true enough, if Frank and Kate leave me. (*Aloud.*) Well, I'm glad to hear of your success, Betsy.

MISS C. Success! Do you mean to imply——

SIR G. 'Gad! You know you've been endeavouring to capture Sir Hector these ten years.

MISS C. Monstrous! The idea of the thing! Geoffrey, I was in hopes we should part friends——

SIR H. Really, Sir Geoffrey, I must beg——

SIR G. Well, well, I wish you both joy, and hope you'll manage to agree. For my part, I shall certainly miss the daily little wranglings my sister and I have engaged in regularly for the past five years. I can only counsel you, Sir Hector, to keep cool under such circumstances, and let her have her own way as I have done—although she may be in the wrong.

MISS C. Ah, Geoffrey, if I have any influence with Sir Hector when I am his wife, we shall leave this neighbourhood and take a cottage on the banks of the Thames, where, in the summer days, we may walk hand-in-hand among the flowers, and, giving up all worldly thoughts, may lift ourselves into the ethereal regions of poetry.

SIR G. A pretty picture indeed! Phyllis and Corydon walking in Arcadia.

MISS C. No, brother,—Damon and Chloe; for we will still retain those names with each other, under which our love was confessed!

*Enter FRANK, followed by KATE.*

FRANK. Sir, here is a telegram for you, which was given me by mistake. It contains some important news.

SIR G. (*Opening it.*) Well, when Chloe gets into her tantrums, mind you—you—Good heavens! Ministry resigned! Oh, Frank, if I had only been there, I might have saved them! It was their own fault,—they told me they didn't want me!

TOM. (*Aside.*) No, I'll be bound they didn't!

SIR G. A new election! And I am sure to be opposed by that rascally agitator, who nearly beat me on the last occasion. Good gracious! What shall I do—what shall I do?

*Enter RAFFLER, CLARA, and BABY.*

CLARA. Is your father distracted, Frank?

RAF. Poor old man! He's raving.

SIR G. (*Rushing to door.*) Arnold! Arnold! Dear me! Dear me! I must set to work at once. (*Walking about wildly.*)

CLARA. (*To KATE.*) Have you succeeded?

KATE. Not yet; I think we shall presently.

BABY. (*To TOM.*) Is papa ill?

TOM. No; he's only parliamentary!

*Enter ARNOLD.*

SIR G. Quick, Arnold, we must lose no time! Sit down! Sit down! (*Walking about with his arm under his coat-tail.*) Gentle-

With CLARA.) Sir Geoffrey, Mrs. Raffler and myself have

"Good-bye."

Miss Bellingham—and myself.

and to you now, I'll see what I can do

I have the honour—

who?—late—say, I should like to have an

daughter.

Gentlemen! I

have the honour to

FRANK. (*By.*) Sir Geoffrey, I await your decision whether my

wife and I are to

leave the house? D—e, Frank, I think

SIR G. (*Surprised.*) to propose to leave the house just at this

anxious time

When he's just been turned out himself.

SIR. It was you who desired—

SIR G. No, Frank, I did think I might rely on your assistance at this crisis in my affairs, indeed I did!

FRANK. But, Sir, I don't wish to leave the house at all.

SIR G. Then, stay in it, my dear boy. Gentlemen!—

FRANK. Will you receive Kate as my wife?

SIR G. To be sure—to be sure! Kiss me, Kate. (*Kissing her*) Gentlemen! I have the honour to inform you—

MISS C. My dear Geoffrey, you are flurried.

SIR H. Take your time, Sir Geoffrey.

FRANK. I think you need not proceed, Sir, as immediately on reading the telegram, I concocted an address, and, if you approve of it, the groom is waiting in the yard to carry it to the printing office.

SIR G. God bless you, Frank, that was thoughtful of you. Let me see it at once.

FRANK. Before we set about it, bid good-bye to Mr. and Mrs. Raffler.

SIR G. Yes, yes. Tom, you shall have Baby if you behave well.

BABY. There, Tom!

TOM. I'll be a paragon of excellence!

SIR G. Paragon of excellence! That's a good phrase, Tom; you shall run for some county.

TOM. I'd sooner let the county run for me.

SIR G. Mr. Raffler, I hope you and your wife will meet with every happiness. I think you have abilities, and now that you are going to settle down—

RAF. Don't say settle down! It sounds as if I had proposed to pay my creditors.

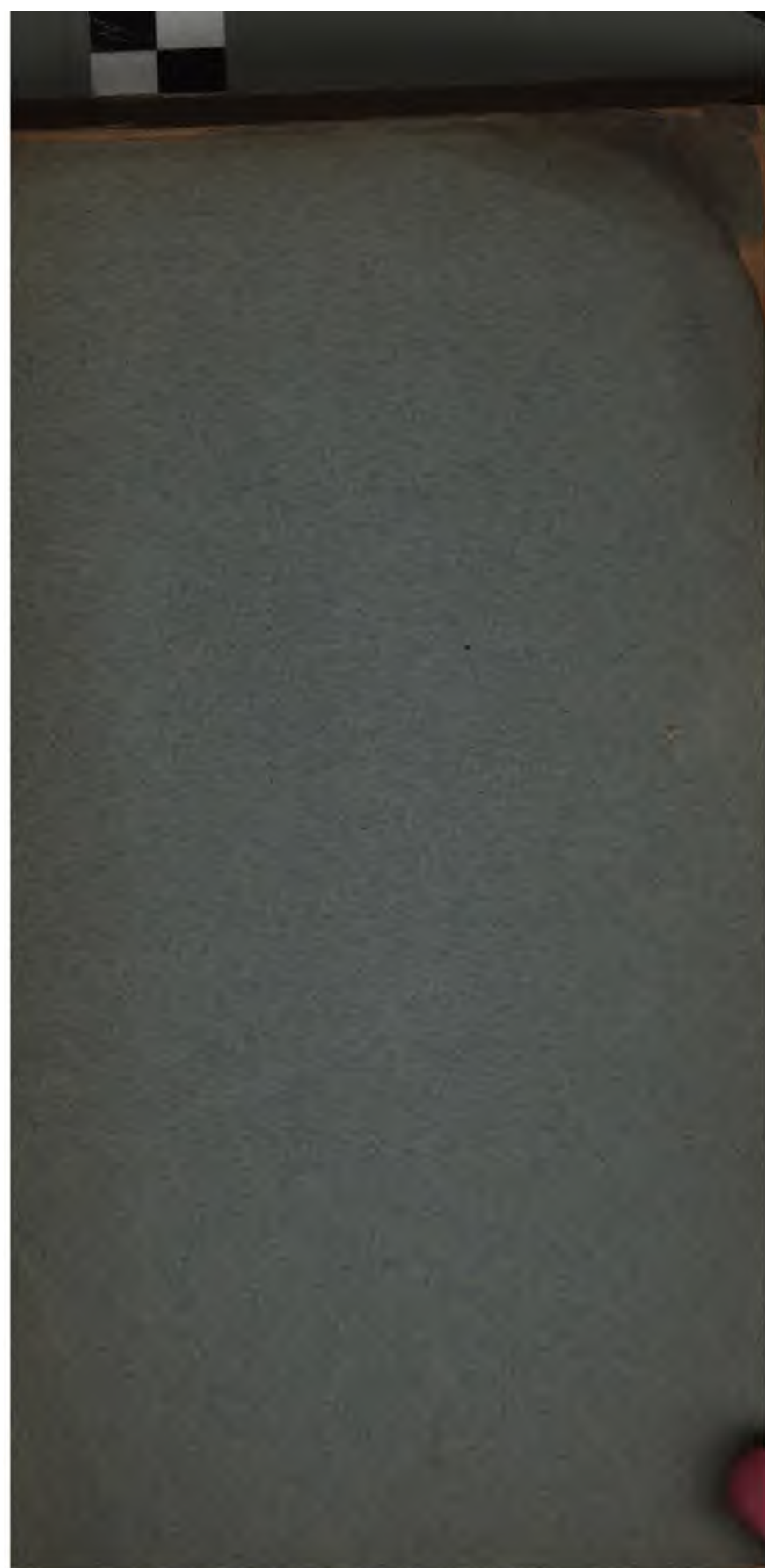
SIR G. Well, well, let it pass. Miss Bell—Mrs. Raffler, I mean, I must confess I had hopes of effecting a marriage between you and my son, but—

CLARA. But he has chosen a much better wife than I should have made him. Women are strange beings, Sir Geoffrey,—full of inconsistencies, such as few men can understand. If your ambitious, Kate will aid him; while he keeps his eye fixed upon the goal of his ambition, she will surmount every trifling obstacles that lie in his course. But who will be that she loves him! Love's power is great. Frank and Kate are braver, and richer; it opens up new ideas, our success, Betsy. a dull mind into a great one! Nor imply—

is the parent of numberless other virtues, such as honour and generosity; and when we near death at last, Love the path to the grave!

While on the stage of  
Love is the ruling passion.

CURTAIN.









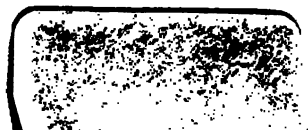




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